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FERGUS FEARNAUGHT; OR, OUR NEW YORK BOYS.

A Story of the Byways and Thoroughfares by Daylight and Gaslight.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN,

Author of "False Faces; or, The Man Without a Name," "Roll, the Reckless," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE STREET ARABS.

It was a curious sight—one well calculated to attract the attention of the passer-by.

A group of boys—the *gamins*, or street arabs of New York city—was gathered at the junction of Chatham and William streets.

The object of this gathering was plainly perceptible in the central figure in the group.

This figure was a boy, who stood in a peculiar attitude. He had engaged the services of two boot-blacks, either with a view to expedition, or swayed by some eccentricity of his nature, and stood, something in the *pose* of the famed Colossus of Rhodes, on their two boxes, with one boy polishing his right boot, and the other his left.

The appearance of the boy was as peculiar as the attitude he had chosen. He had a frank and open face, with strongly defined features, and he wore his hair, which was light-brown, inclining to red, or what is termed auburn, quite long and flowing.

His skin was very white, somewhat freckled, and he had a color in his cheeks that many young girls would have envied. His nose was long and straight, his eyes a dark blue, the pupils looking like glittering sapphires set in ivory; and he had a small, well-shaped mouth, with finely cut lips, upon which decision was firmly stamped.

There was a kind of "don't care" air in the boy's face and manner generally that impressed the beholder at once with the idea that he was, to use a common expression, "full of fight."

This idea was a correct one, as the reader who follows this veracious narration to an end will discover.

The boy's clothes were none of the best, and the boots which he was having polished were patched in several places, yet his appearance denoted cleanliness and a desire to make the most of his limited advantages.

He formed a striking contrast to the boys by whom he was surrounded, and they evidently considered him a being apart and not in common with themselves.

The free-and-easy *pose* he had assumed, and the patronizing manner in which he had directed the boys to "shine 'em up good," had not been without its effect upon them.

It is true, however, that the juvenile boot-blacks, who are generally eager enough for a "shine," evinced some hesitation to accept that youth's proposal to "go to work," and one of them, whose Irish descent was plainly perceptible in his features, remarked, with great pertinacity:

"Say, Cully, I shines fur der shiners. How are ye off fur der brads?"

"Dat am de question?" added a sable youth, who also followed the occupation of boot-blacking boots.

"Take you both, and give you a five-cent nickel each!" cried the free-and-easy lad, in a very nonchalant manner.

This promise amazed the boot-blacks.

"Mebbe yer flush!" exclaimed the Irish youth, who was on the street as "The Chicken," though his baptismal appellation was John Dugan.

"I'd like to see dat nickel," said the black boy, who appeared to be of a suspicious nature.

He also bore the street name of "Cockroach"—a nickname suggested by his true name, which was Sherod Roach.

Boys are very apt in choosing nicknames for their comrades and playmates.

The boy customer inserted his hand into the right-hand pocket of his trowsers, and drew forth about ten bright five-cent pieces.

He tossed these up in the air, one at a time, and dexterously caught them in his left hand as they descended, after the manner of a conjuror.

A butcher-boy, who was passing along with a basket on his arm, paused and gazed in admiration at this feat.

"How is that for high?" inquired the frank and fearless youth.

"Perty tall!" responded the butcher-boy, whose square figure, and fat, stolid face, sufficiently proclaimed his Teutonic origin.

The boot-blacks both recognized this youth as an acquaintance.

"Hello, Dutchy!" cried the Chicken.

"How is you, Knockemhigher?" inquired the darky.

The butcher-boy had also acquired a nickname—his family appellation of Knochenhaver having been familiarly twisted into "Knockemhigher."

The young Dutchman merely grinned, show-



Sail in, bubbles—go to work!" he exclaimed encouragingly to the bootblacks.

ing a set of strong white teeth, in answer to these salutations.

The Chicken and the Cockroach set down their boxes upon the sidewalk, and the light-haired youth stepped upon them, placing one foot on each.

"Sail in, bubbles—go to work!" he exclaimed, encouragingly, to the bootblacks, and he jingled the five-cent pieces merrily in his hand.

This music was very stimulating, for they set to work at once with a will, each emulous to outstrip the other in the desired "shine."

The novelty of the strange boy's position soon attracted a crowd of the boys who haunted that neighborhood, and their exclamations and salutations revealed a variety of names by which they distinguished each other.

There was a large, slouchy boy, in an old cap, and a ragged suit of clothes, with his reddish hair closely cut, a pug nose, and a bulldog expression of countenance, who was distinguished as "Rowdy Rube."

He was evidently the "cock of the walk,"

or "bully" of that locality. The bundle of newspapers which he carried under his left arm proclaimed his vocation. He was a newsboy.

There was another lad, with a dark olive complexion, sharp black eyes, curly black hair, and a hump on his nose, who was saluted as "Ikey."

He was the son of Jacob Jacobs, the pawn-broker in the vicinity.

And there was another *gamin*, with a forlorn look on his face, who was called by the perplexing name of "Loose Lemons."

When you learned that his name was Louis Lamoire you could understand the transformation that gave him that peculiar title.

The cosmopolitan population of the great metropolis afforded still another foreign boy type: This was a diminutive Italian who carried a small fiddle and a bow.

He was one of those unhappy mites of humanity that Crosby street sends out into the streets to earn a few pennies in a musical way.

This juvenile musician appeared to have

friends among the other boys, who called him "Ben Gummy." They had shortened his full name of Benedusto Gumno into this, with easy facility.

Nor were the boys alone attracted by the peculiar position our hero had assumed. Two men paused, who were walking leisurely up Chatham street, conversing in an interested manner.

The moment the eyes of one of them fell upon the face of the boy he stopped abruptly, and exclaimed, in an involuntary manner:

"Good heavens!"

This exclamation greatly surprised his companion!

"Eh, eh!" he cried. "What's the matter? What's broke?"

"Look at that boy!"

"Eh, eh! What is there remarkable about him? A street vagabond!"

"No common street vagabond, I am certain," returned his companion.

"I want to take a better look at him."

"Why?" inquired the other, curiously.

"So you will not tell me your name?" retorted Glendenning, coaxingly, and not evincing any annoyance at the boy's somewhat impudent manner.

Rufus Glendenning was one of those men who could keep his temper under exasperating circumstances, particularly when he had a point to gain; and he undoubtedly had one in this instance.

"Why should I?" answered Fergus, carelessly.

"Why should you not?" returned Glendenning, smilingly.

Fergus cast another searching glance into the dark face before him, his manner showing that his short experience of life had made him suspicious of the world's denizens. Perhaps he had cause to be so. We shall learn that when we come to know him better. It was evident, though, that Glendenning had not impressed him favorably, and that he was not disposed to gratify the man's curiosity.

"Well, my name might be Jones," he said, slowly.

"Ah!"

"But it isn't!" continued Fergus, with a chuckle; whereat all the other boys laughed.

"Dat is goot!" cried Ben Gummy, the Italian boy, showing his white teeth after the fashion of a pleased monkey.

"I'll tell yer what his name is!" exclaimed Rowdy Rube, eying the fractional note, which Glendenning still held in his hand, covetously.

"Do so, and you shall have this," said Glendenning, holding the note toward him.

"His name is Fergus Fearnought," cried Rowdy Rube, and he quickly secured the cased note. "Oh, my heyes, but yer's a haul!" he added, delightedly.

He did not see the wrathful glance that Fergus shot at him; perhaps it would not have troubled him if he had.

"Fergus Fearnought?" muttered Glendenning. "That's an odd name! It can not, surely, be his right name?"

"Why not?" demanded his companion, who, standing by his elbow, overheard these muttered words. "He's odd enough to have any kind of an odd name."

These words, though not spoken in a very loud tone, reached the boy's ears, and, for the first time, drew his attention to this man.

"Hello! Why there's Pickles!" he exclaimed, in a ringing tone. "How's thy styring down to the Tombs, now, eh, Pickles?"

The personage thus addressed grew crimson in the face from the tip of his long nose to the roots of his sandy hair.

"How dare you, you devil's cub!" he exclaimed, wrathfully; and he advanced in a threatening manner upon the boy, who threw himself into a boxing attitude, and squared off at the enraged man.

"Hi! hi! just twig him, boys!" he cried, sarcastically. "The little great lawyer is riled!"

CHAPTER II.

A "BULLY FIGHT."

GLENDENNING caught the diminutive lawyer by the arm and led him away; he made no resistance, only sputtering to himself in a highly incensed manner.

"Come away—don't make a fool of yourself—he's only a boy," said Glendenning, as he pulled his companion away. "I've learned all I wish to know—at present."

"Phew! what an impudent cub!" sputtered Pickles, for he really did bear that singular cognomen; and he was by no means pleased with it.

His sign at his office door—the door of an ancient wooden frame building on Center street—bore this inscription:

EFFINGHAM H. PICKLES,
Attorney at Law.

This sign denoted the particular weakness of the little lawyer. Those who had known him in boyhood declared that he had always been called "Hank Pickles"—having been christened Henry, and that the high-sounding prefix of Effingham had been of his own selection and adoption. This looked like an effort upon his part to overshadow the Pickles with the Effingham. But it was a failure, as such attempts generally are.

He could not efface the record of his birth, nor blind the eyes of people to the fact that he was the son (and heir) of honest John Pickles, or "Pickle John," as he was always called; for he had, by some strange arrangement of destiny, taken up the pickle trade as a means of gaining a livelihood.

Some people are said to have a "soul above buttons;" on the same principle young Henry had a soul above pickles. He despised his father's business and would have nothing to do with it.

He satisfied the longings of his ambition by entering a lawyer's office, at an early age, and began to study law with the high aspiration of one day sitting on the judge's bench of the supreme court.

In the atmosphere of law the latent rascality in his nature developed with a rapid growth.

"Like father like son" has been an old saying, but it is by no means a truism. There are many sons who grow up very unlike their fathers, and Hank Pickles was a striking illustration of this fact.

He was as full of roguery as his father was of honesty, and the worthy old pickle merchant went to his grave with a settled conviction that "Hank would come to no good."

The young lawyer was not ignorant of his father's opinion of him, but it did not trouble him to the extent of greatly disturbing his peace of mind. He thought that parent had injured him beyond all forgiveness by obliging his high ambition and great aspirations to struggle under so heavy a load as the name of Pickles.

Thus you will readily understand the state of wrath into which he had been wrought by Fergus Fearnought's unceremonious salutation. No wonder he considered the boy an "impudent cub."

Rufus Glendenning rather enjoyed the little lawyer's sputtering rage.

"The boy evidently knows you," he said.

"Yes," growled Pickles.

"Do you know him?" inquired Glendenning.

"I! No! never set eyes on his brazen face before," answered Pickles, testily.

"Then how comes it that he appears to be so familiar with you?"

"Oh! they all know me."

"All who?"

"All the young rogues and rascals about New York. They see me about the courts, and most of them have been hauled up on some charge or other. Couldn't you see jail-bird written distinctly on his countenance?"

"Indeed I could not! I think the boy has a very handsome and striking face."

Pickles made a grimace.

"There's no accounting for tastes," he rejoined.

This was a mild way of expressing his difference of opinion with his friend and patron.

"And then, such an odd name as he has," continued Glendenning, musingly—"Fergus Fearnought!"

"Oh! bless you, that is not his right name," cried Pickles, quickly.

Glendenning smiled in the mysterious manner characteristic with him.

"Do you think so?" he rejoined.

"I do, most decidedly," replied Pickles, emphatically.

"So do I."

"You do?"

"Yes; and I would give something handsome to find out what his true name is," answered Glendenning, impressively.

Pickles became interested at once; he was always on the alert for any chance for profit.

"Ah!" he ejaculated, encouragingly.

"Could not you find out something about this gamin for me?"

"I might."

"I would make it well worth your while."

"Of course; you have been extremely lib-

eral to me in our little transactions," responded Pickles, obsequiously. "But I don't understand what interest you can possibly take in this young arab," he added.

"It is not necessary that you should. It is enough for you to know that I do take an interest in him."

"Of course; you thought he resembled—um—ah?" The lawyer paused, but as Glendenning did not deign to answer, he continued: "some particular—I might say, some very dear friend of yours?"

A strange light gleamed from Glendenning's dark eyes.

"Oh! very dear!" he replied.

But the expression of his face, and the tone of his voice, made his words a puzzle, as you could not reconcile them with each other.

Pickles noted this in a bewildered manner.

He was tolerably keen-witted, as one of his calling must necessarily be, but there were many things about his friend and client, Rufus Glendenning, as he was fond of calling him, as he happened to be the only wealthy client the little lawyer had ever possessed—that he had never been able to understand. He generally gave up the attempt to solve the riddle with the observation:

"Close, close as an oyster! The closest man I ever saw!"

In his opinion—and he was not unlike his fellow-mortals in this respect—anybody who could fiddle his penetration must be very deep, indeed. Yet he cunningly reflected that his pursuit of the information which Rufus Glendenning showed himself anxious to obtain must necessarily reveal his motive to him.

"If I understand you right you want this boy shadowed!" resumed the lawyer.

This detective phrase was not familiar to Glendenning's ears.

"Shadowed?" he rejoined, surprisedly;

"what do you mean by that?"

"Watched by some one who will follow him as closely and stick to him like his own shadow."

"Dat was goot!" he told Fergus, delightedly.

"You knock him down goot—oh, my! fast-rate!" Hit him some more de next times."

"I'll hit you!" cried harsh voice, and a ratan descended, with a slashing sound, upon Ben Gummy's back.

"Yah!" he yelled, in pain and affright.

"You lazy little whelp! is this the way you fool your time away, instead of trying to earn some pennies? I'll teach you better!"

Again the ratan was raised, but the blow was not given the second time, for Fergus sprung upon the man, wrenched the ratan from his grasp and dealt him a couple of cutting blows across the face.

"Take you care—it is de padrone!" cried Ben Gummy, warningly, as he saw Fergus spring forward.

"You coward—to strike such a little fellow, and for nothing!" exclaimed Fergus, indignantly, as he administered the cuts, with all the strength of his vigorous young arm, upon the padrone's face.

This padrone was a small-sized, wiry-framed Italian, past middle life, with a bearded, swarthy face, somewhat sinister in expression. His features by no means evinced an amiable disposition.

Never was a man more astonished than he was by Fergus' unexpected attack, and his rage was equal to his astonishment.

"Maledizione!" he sputtered; for, though he could speak very good English, ordinarily, he always expressed himself in his native tongue when enraged.

Then he drew forth a keen-bladed knife from some secret pocket, and sprang toward Fergus, with a murderous intention gleaming from his small, glittering and bead-like eyes.

"Take you care!" cried Ben Gummy, who knew the significance of this action; it was not the first time he had seen a drawn knife in the padrone's hand; and then he took to his heels and ran away, leaving Fergus at the mercy of the enraged Italian.

But Fergus never thought of flying; he doubled up his fists and faced the padrone, boldly.

Well had he been given the name of Fear-naught, for the thought of fear appeared to be unknown to him.

His bravery, however, would have availed him but little in this emergency where the odds were so much against him, if aid had not come to him in a most unexpected manner.

"Stop that!" cried a clear, youthful voice, and its owner enforced the command by rapping the padrone over the knuckles of his right hand with the little gutta-percha cane he carried.

These raps were given with such quickness and precision, that the padrone dropped his knife, with an exclamation of pain, and then stood grimacing at the boys, and swearing furiously a string of Italian oaths.

"Oh, dry-up, and be off!" advised the newcomer, in a peremptory manner; and he shifted his cane in his hand, giving full play to its ball-shaped, lead-loaded top.

This action was not lost upon the padrone, nor the appearance and good clothes of his new opponent.

He quickly stooped, recovered his knife and ratan, flung a parting oath at the boys, and then shuffled down the street.

"The macaroni-eater has beat a retreat!" cried the new-comer, laughingly.

And the little boys who had been attracted by the altercation, shouted:

"Hi! hi!" approvingly.

"Bully for you, Ferg! Sail in, Rube! Put a head on him, Ferg! Climb on his left eye brow, Rube!" were the cries, indicating that each boy had his friends among the lookers-on, and that their favoritism was pretty equally divided.

Rube threw himself into a boxing attitude, and began to flourish his long arms, with the red fists at the end of them. Being twice the size of Fergus he was confident of victory.

Most of the boys appeared to think that Fergus stood no chance against him.

The boy bully had got up a large reputation on a small capital, as is generally the case.

Those in the crowd who sympathized with Fergus trembled for the result.

"Cut and run," advised Ben Gummy, the fiddler boy. "He be big enough to eat you."

"Not much!" responded Fergus. "He can't get away with me as easy as he thinks. I'll knock the spots out of him in five minutes."

And he boldly awaited the attack of Rowdy Rube. This youth plumped forward with his head down, something after the fashion of an enraged bull.

Expecting his opponent to fly without resistance, he did not keep a very sharp look-out ahead. In consequence of this his fists went on either side of Fergus' head without touching it, and he received a blow under the chin that made his teeth rattle in his jaws, and sent him to the sidewalk in a sitting posture, where he gave utterance to a dismal howl—a howl in which surprise, rage and pain were strangely blended.

"Hoaray!" shouted the boys, delightedly.

This first repulse of the bully sent all their sympathy over to Fergus.

"I'll fix you for that!" howled Rowdy Rube.

He gathered himself hastily up, and made another and more desperate plunge at Fergus, who stepped lightly aside, thrust out his foot, tripped up Rube, and sent him sprawling in the gutter.

Rube was completely demoralized by this second overthrow. As he attempted to rise he saw Fergus standing over him.

"Lemme up!" he whined.

CHAPTER III.

A YOUNG BLOOD.

"HOORAY!" shouted the boys again.

The bully was whipped, there was no mistaking about that, and he would no longer dare tyrannize over them.

The blow given him under the chin by Fergus had caused him to bite his under lip and the blood trickled forth, to his great consternation. He seemed to think he had received a mortal injury, and all desire for further fighting was completely taken out of him.

"Lemme up!" he whined, abjectly, for the second time.

"Have you had enough?" inquired Fergus.

"Yes," answered Rowdy Rube.

"And some to spare," added the Chicken.

This remark produced a shout of laughter from the other boys, and in the midst of it, Rowdy Rube gathered himself up, recovered his bundle of papers, and went slouching down the street, never opening his lips to cry hi-wares until he reached the next corner.

The other boys began to move away in different directions, but the Italian fiddler remained with Fergus. His easy victory over Rowdy Rube had greatly raised Fergus in Ben Gummy's estimation. He had received sundry punches and kicks from the bully, which he was too small and weak to resent, and he derived a natural satisfaction in witnessing that summary punishment.

"Dat was goot!" he told Fergus, delightedly.

"You knock him down goot—oh, my! fast-rate!"

"I'll hit you!" cried harsh voice, and a ratan descended, with a slashing sound, upon Ben Gummy's back.

"Yah!" he yelled, in pain and affright.

"You lazy little whelp! is this the way you fool your time away, instead of trying to earn some pennies? I'll teach you better!"

Again the ratan was raised, but the blow was not given the second time, for Fergus sprung upon the man, wrenched the ratan from his grasp and dealt him a couple of cutting blows across the face.

"Take you care—it is de padrone!" cried Ben Gummy, warningly, as he saw Fergus spring forward.

"You coward—to strike such a little fellow, and for nothing!" exclaimed Fergus, indignantly.

Clinton laughed, in his careless, good-natured way.

"You can gamble on that," he replied.

"Will you?" said the admiral, facing briskly round. "Just stand by till we see how we're coming. The question is, now, where's Firefly? That's the question, ain't it, Snowdrop?"

Erminie's sobs were her only answer.

"Just stand by a minute longer, will you?" said the admiral, lifting up the forefinger of his right hand, and aiming it at Erminie's head. "Firefly's gone—sunk—went to the bottom, and no one left to tell the tale—ain't that it, Snowdrop?"

Erminie, knowing the admiral must be answered, made a motion of assent.

"Now the question is," went on the admiral, bringing the finger down upon the palm of his other hand, and looking fixedly at them; "the question; what did Firefly run afoul of? She must have run afoul of something, mustn't she, Snowdrop?"

"Y-e-s, I suppose so," said Erminie, not very clearly understanding the admiral's logic.

"And that something she run afoul of is supposed to be smugglers. Port your helm," roared the admiral, on whose somewhat obtuse mind the whole affair was slowly beginning to dawn.

"Oh, Admiral Haventul! what do you think they will do with her? Surely they will not kill her!" exclaimed Erminie, looking up imploringly.

"Just you hold on a minute longer, will you, Snowdrop?" said the admiral, looking fixedly at the fingers lying on his broad left palm "and don't you keep putting me out like this. Pet's run afoul of smugglers; they have boarded her, and she's knocked under and surrendered. Ain't that it, Snowdrop?"

"They have carried her off—yes, sir," wept Erminie.

"They have carried her off—yes, sir," slowly repeated the admiral, in the same tone of intense thoughtfulness, "they have carried her off, but where to? There it is, Snowdrop, where to?"

"Oh, I wish I knew! I wish I knew! If we could only discern that, all would be well. Oh, dear, dear Pet!"

"Pet has run afoul of smugglers and been carried off, nobody knows where. Stand from under!" yelled the admiral, in a perfect paroxysm of grief and consternation, as the whole affair now burst in full force upon him.

There was no reply from Erminie, who still wept in silent grief.

"Main topsail haul!" shouted the old man, in mingled rage and grief, as it all dawned clearly upon his mind at last. "Pet's gone! Been captivated; been boarded, scuttled, and sunk. Oh, perdition!" yelled the admiral, jumping up and stamping up and down, grasping his wig with both hands, in his tempest of grief. "Oh, Firefly, you dear, blessed little angel! You darned, diabolical little fool! Going and thrusting your nose into every mischief that ever was invented. Oh, you darling, merry little whirligig! You confounded, blamed, young demon! To go and get yourself into such a scrape. Oh, if I only had hold of the villains! They ought to be hung to the yard-arm, every blessed one of them. Oh, Pet, my darling! By the body and bones of Paul Jones, you ought to be thrashed within an inch of your life. Oh, oh, oh!" roared the admiral, in a final burst of grief, as he flung himself into his chair and began a fierce mopping of his inflamed face.

While thus engaged, another step resounded without—a slow, lingering, dejected step—and the next moment the pallid features, and mild blue eyes of Mr. Toosy pegs beamed upon them from the door.

"Orlando," shouted the afflicted admiral, "she's went and did it! Firefly's gone and did it! Yes, Orlando, she's gone to Davy's locker, I expect, before this, and the Lord have mercy on her soul!"

"Admiral Haventul, I'm really sorry to hear it, I really am," said Mr. Toosy pegs, wiping his eyes with the north-west corner of his yellow bandana. "I never felt so bad about anything in my life. I never did, I assure you, Admiral Haventul. But why can't they go to Davy's locker after her? I should think they wouldn't mind the expense in a case like this."

"Orlando C. Toosy pegs," said the admiral, severely: "I hope you don't mean to poke fun at people in grief; because if you do, it shows a very improper spirit on your part, and a total depravity I should be sorry to see, Orlando Toosy pegs."

"Why, my gracious!" said the astonished and aggrieved Mr. Toosy pegs; "what have I said? I'm sure, Admiral Haventul, I hadn't the remotest idea of being funny, that ever was; and if I said anything that wasn't right, I beg your pardon for it, and can assure you I never meant it."

"Well, then, enough said," testily interrupted the admiral. "Now, Snowdrop, look here; what are they going to do about Pet?"

"Ray and Ranty have gone to Judestown to get the people to search. They think she is somewhere along the beach, in some hidden cave the smugglers have there."

"U-m-m! very good," said the admiral, nodding his head approvingly; "perhaps they will find her yet. I'll go over to Judestown myself, and ship along with the rest. We'll scour the whole coast; so that if she's above water anywhere, we must find her."

"I'll go, too, Admiral Haventul," said Mr. Toosy pegs, with more alacrity than he usually betrayed; "that is, if you think there is no danger with them smugglers. You don't think there is any danger, do you, Admiral Haventul?"

"Blame them—yes!" roared the admiral, fiercely. "I wish to the Lord Harry I could only come across some of them! I'll be blown if I wouldn't give them the confoundedest keel-hauling they ever got in their lives! If you are afraid, Orlando Toosy pegs," said the admiral, facing round with savage abruptness, "stay at home! Any man that wouldn't volunteer in a case like this, ought to be swum to the yard-arm and left to feed the crows. You would be a blue look-out for the commander of a privateer—wouldn't you?"

"Admiral Haventul," said Mr. Toosy pegs, abashed and rather terrified by this outburst, "I beg your pardon, and I ain't the least afraid. I'll go with you, and do my best to help you to keel-haul the smugglers, whatever that may be. Miss Minnie, good-by. Don't take on about it, because well be sure to find Miss Pet and bring her home. I dare say the smugglers will give her up, if they're only asked politely."

The admiral heard this comforting assurance with a snort of unspeakable contempt, and then waddled out; and groaning bodily and mentally, mounted Ringbone, and accompanied by Mr. Toosy pegs, set out at the rate of half a knot an hour to Judestown.

During the remainder of the day, Erminie was left alone, half wild with alternate hope, terror, anxiety, and expectation. Her busy

fingers, for a wonder, were idle now, as she passed continually in and out, watching, with feverish impatience, the forest road, in the hope of seeing some one who could give her some news of how the search progressed.

But night came, and no messenger had arrived to relieve her torturing anxiety.

It was a sultry, starlit night. Not a breath of air stirred the motionless leaves of the forest trees, and the clear chirp of the katydid and lonely cry of the whippoor-will alone broke the oppressive silence. Down on the shore below, she could faintly hear the dreary murmur of the waves as they sighed softly to the shore; and at long intervals the wild, piercing cry of some sea-bird would resound above all, as it skinned wildly across the dark, restless deep.

The wide, lonesome heath was as silent as the grave; and the long line of cherry-red light that usually shone over it from the parlor-windows of the White Squall was not visible to night—the dreary darkness beneath it master was away. The forest lay wrapped in somber gloom, looming up, like some huge, dark shadow, in the light of the solemn, beautiful stars.

All within the cottage was silent, too. Keturah had long ago retired, and the negress, Lucy, was sleeping that deep, death-like sleep peculiar to her race.

Standing in the shadow of the vine-shaded porch, Erminie watched with restless impatience for the return of some one from Judestown—her whole thought of Pet and her probable fate. Unceasingly she reproached herself for having allowed her to depart at all that night; never pausing to reflect how little Pet would have minded her entreaties to stay when she took it into her willful little head to go.

The clock struck nine, and then ten; and still no one came.

Half-despairing of their return that night, Erminie was about to go in, when the thunder of horses' hoofs coming through the forest road arrested her steps.

The next moment horse and rider came dashing at a mad, excited gallop up to the door and leaped off and approached.

"Oh, Ray, is there any news of her? Is she found?" eagerly exclaimed Erminie.

"No; nor is she likely to be as far as I can see," said Ray, gloomily. "Not the slightest trace of her has been found, though the whole beach has been searched, from one end to another. They have given it up now, and gone home for to-night. Ranty and the men set up an insolent laugh."

The men, still grasping their swords, had encircled Ray, and were glaring upon him with darkly-threatening eyes, as he stood boldly erect, and undauntedly confronting the smuggler chief.

"Well," said that personage, at last, breaking the silence, and calmly surveying the intruder from head to foot, "who the foul fiend are you, young man, that you come tumbling from the clouds among us in this fashion?"

"He is a revenue spy. Let us pitch him in the river, cap'n!" said Black Bart.

"Silence, sir! Come, my good youth, answer: What is your business here?"

"My business is, to discover the young lady you have so basely abducted. If you are the leader of this gang of cut-throats, I demand to be instantly informed where she is!" said Ray, determined to put a bold front on the matter since he was in for it.

"Whew-w!" whistled the captain, while the men set up an insolent laugh. "For coolness and effrontry, that modest demand cannot be easily beat. And what if we refuse, young sir?"

"Your refusal will not matter much, since to-morrow your retreat will assuredly be discovered, and then you will every one meet the doom of your diabolical actions deserve!"

"And what may that be, most candid youth?" said the smuggler chief, with a sneer.

"Hanging!" said Ray, boldly; "a fate too good for villains base enough to forcibly carry off a helpless young girl!"

With low, but passionate imprecations of rage, the outlaws closed around Ray; and his mortal career might have ended then and there, but that the captain a second time interfered.

"Back, men!" he said, authoritatively.

"Let there be no bloodshed to-night. Do you not know there are two places where a man ought to speak without interruption—in the pulpit and on the gallows. This foolhardy fellow is as completely in our power as though he were swinging in mid-air, so he can speak with impunity. Pray proceed, my dear sir. Your conversation is mighty edifying and interesting. So, hanging is too good for some of us, eh? Now, what would you recommend to be done with us, supposing you were our judge?"

"Burning at the stake, perhaps?" suggested Black Bart; "and after that to be hung down and quartered!"

"This is no time for fooling!" exclaimed Ray, impetuously. "I demand to be instantly led to Miss Lawless, wherever she may be!"

"A demand I am most happy to comply with," said Captain Reginald. "I always do like to oblige my guests when I can. This way, my young sir. But just keep your eye on him—will you?—and see that he does not give you the slip."

"Ay, ay, cap'n," said Bart. "Hadn't I better bind and blindfold him?"

"No, it will be needless, as, in all probability he will never set foot on this shore again."

"I understand: 'Dead men tell no tales!'"

All right, cap'n," said Black Bart, with a demagogic laugh, as the whole party, with their prisoner in their midst, started along the beach after the captain.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

their labor for their pains. Well, cap'n, does the gal still stick to her story that she ain't the one she ought to be?"

The reply to this was given in so low a tone that Ray could not hear it, and in his intense eagerness he leaned further over to listen. But, as he did so, he lost his balance. He strove to save himself, but in vain; over he must go; and seeing there was no help for it, he took a flying leap, and landed right in the midst of the astounded freebooters!

With interjections of surprise and alarm, half a dozen bright blades instantly flashed in the moonlight; but, ere any violence could be offered, the tall form of the outlaw chief interposed between them, and father and son stood face to face!

CHAPTER XXXV.

FATHER AND SON.

"When lovers meet in adverse hour,
'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a shower—
A watery ray, an instant seen,
Then darkly-closing clouds between."—SCOTT.

SILENTLY they confronted each other—those two, so nearly connected—so long separated—so strangely encountered now. Did no "still, small" inward voice whisper to each that they were man and son? Was the voice of Nature silent, that they should gaze upon each other as strangers gaze?

Yes, even so; for although the outlaw chief started for a moment to see before him the living embodiment of himself at the same age, the emotion passed in a moment, and the strange resemblance was set down to one of those accidental likenesses that so often surprise us, and which cannot be accounted for. Ray, too, fancied this dark, daring, reckless-looking chieftain resembled himself somewhat; but the passing thought had even less effect upon him than it had on the other.

The men, still grasping their swords, had encircled Ray, and were glaring upon him with darkly-threatening eyes, as he stood boldly erect, and undauntedly confronting the smuggler chief.

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(To be continued—commenced in No. 290.)

Nick Whiffles' Pet:

OR, NED HAZEL, THE BOY TRAPPER.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS.

CHAPTER XVI.—CONTINUED.

NED MACKINTOSH was prudent enough, when he left the camp with Miona, to take a very different direction from that which led toward his destination. When assured that he was beyond sight he turned off sharply to the right and made all haste toward the ridges which for so long a time seemed to have shut them in.

Whiffles was confident that they had traveled a goodly distance by this time, for both of them were too wise to permit anything—not absolutely beyond their control—to prevent their making all haste out of what they might properly view as a literal Valley of death.

So the trapper did not bother to look to the right or left, but kept straight on toward the mountain, intent only upon reaching it as close in the rear of his friends as possible.

He knew the Blackfoot were swarming through the valley, searching up and down in every direction for their prey, and, as he had remarked to his friends, this persistent pursuit would be kept up so long as there was the least prospect of success.

Laying his head close to the ground, he could catch, at intervals, this conversation:

"Yes; he's gone for good; cleared out when he found he must be discovered. What a pretty mess you made out of it, Black Bart, taking the wrong gal, after all," said one of them.

"Well, it wasn't my fault," growled Black Bart. "How was I to know from one t'other? Serves the old sinner right, too, to get taken in. Curse Garnett! This comes of trusting these infernal land-sharks."

"What a beautiful hunt they had over the beach to-day!" said another, with a low chuckle.

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We shall commence in our next a series of *historic biographies*, giving graphic, spirited and authentic sketches of THE MEN OF '76, to whose patriotism, bravery and devotion we owe our independence as a people.

In this, the Centennial Year of our existence as a nation, it is eminently proper to inform the mind and instruct the heart upon the lives and labors of the FATHERS OF THE REPUBLIC—thus to re-inspire the spirit of liberty, and to disseminate that knowledge of the past which every citizen and youth in the land should be eager to obtain.

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A CHILD OF THE STREETS,

the familiar with the nameless classes, and those who "live by their wits," he is yet, by some invisible influence, kept apart from them, and in the course of his most exciting adventures and experiences catches glimpses of that higher, nobler, better life which is his by right of birth and heritage.

A Romance of Reality,

it brings in several very prominent actors and participants well known in the history of city courts, and the leading events are drawn from one of the strongest passages in that history, wherein a lady of great beauty, talent and wealth becomes at once a prey to her own heart and to the machinations of an artful plotter, rapidly vacillating between

Street and Salon—Tenement and Palace in its action and exciting interest—making its perusal a source of deepest pleasure to all classes of readers alike. It is by far Mr. Aiken's happiest effort, and one of the best tales of the times any journal has presented for years.

Sunshine Papers.

Representative Journeyists.

SUMMER and winter, though always more largely in summer, dense rivers of human life flow into New York every morning from other cities and towns near and remote. Some portion of these thousands of journeyists are transient ones; but more are those whose daily avocations are in the metropolis, and whose homes are out of it. This latter class comprises men, young and old, and not a few ladies. There are the business men—merchants, brokers, and bankers, and a large proportion of book-keepers and clerks; also, professional men—editors, engineers, scientists, professors, and lawyers. There are students—stylish young ladies and men arrived at that adolescent period of their life when they know more than all generations past and all to come—and schoolboys and girls, a goodly, merry, rollicking band. The school-teachers travel, too; severe, precise-looking maidens, who do enough dignity for a whole train full or boat-load of people; and lady clerks, operators, cashiers, bookkeepers, artists, journalists, musicians, and, indeed, many who are at the head of a thriving business or department of trade. And, lastly, there is a great army of mechanics, who have cozy, pretty homes where their own in the little suburban villages where high rents do not force them to unpleasant surroundings and cramped apartments.

From North, and South, and East, and West, these half-and-half New Yorkers pour into the town in the morning, and out of it at night, across some one of the rivers that curve around and about the island city. So, always, the route lies over some ferry or bridge. Across the largest bodies of water that swirl and eddy, and ebb and flow about the great city—the Hudson, New York bay, and the East River—the boats of twenty-four ferries are constantly speeding, puffing, dodging and fro. While access to this modern Gotham from the North, where the Harlem dimples and darkens under overhanging rocks and forest growth, and shivers blue in the sunshine along the little Dolly Varden Railway, and the Spuyten Duyvel careers tortuously through the verdant Westchester meadows to the Hudson, is gained by means of seven bridges. The royal highway—King's Bridge, its plebeian neighbor—Farmer's Bridge, Macomb's Dam, and Harlem Bridge—ceaseless thoroughfare, all afford means of egress and ingress to travelers on foot, or in carriages. The lofty structure of High Bridge, suspended dizzy above the Harlem, offers a fine passage to pedestrians, and a bridge at the union of the

Spuyten Duyvel and the Hudson, and another across the Harlem, reverberates constantly with the ever thundering trains of three great railway routes.

Over that other bridge whose towers stand square and massive against the sky, like sentinels guarding the narrowest bend of the city's eastern boundary-river, we New Yorkers only pass in dreams of our future; though even yet its progress has not been mean, and its building is worthy an entire Sunshine Paper.

The larger portion of this daily travel comes to the city by railway; and it is to the cars we must turn for brief photographic glimpses of some representative journeyists. Here are the men—bankers, brokers, or wealthy merchants—who only live out of town half the year, maintaining good style, at both city and country houses. They come upon the train as if they deemed it ran for their express accommodation; the fact that an accommodation train is never an express is not clear to them at all. From the crown of their beavers to the sole of their boots, their immaculate costume, their demurely-gloved hands, their rigidity of action, looks, and manners, bespeak them the personification of self-conscious importance and aristocratic dignity.

Breezy and exciting are the rollicking students who never find room enough for their pedal extremities; not so much owing to their size as to a trick they seem to have contracted of never tarrying above fifteen seconds in one place. They are always restless, changing from one car to another, shouting through all, leaving open doors, putting up windows at the stations to make remarks to any pretty girls who may be on the platform, slapping their fellow travelers familiarly on the back, and laughing loud and long at the faintest suggestion of jokes.

Then there is the interesting class of portly, pompous men, who always wear the latest importation in English suits, a great deal of fob-chain and locket, considerable seal ring upon their fair, fat fourth fingers, and the newest thing out in neckties and scarf-pins, with studs and sleeve-buttons of attractive size. They imagine every one should stand aside when they approach, and resent blustering any liberties taken with their supposed importance. Smooth their plumage the right way and they are as beaming as gorged alligators.

Of young fellows with their hair combed like the pictures in fashion plates, and mustaches that are the pride of their hearts and the pet of their fingers, there is no end. They wear jaunty hats and wrinkleless gloves, and are clerks on six hundred a year. They have an affected little laugh, and laugh constantly, and are ardent admirers of ladies, and consider themselves perfectly irresistible, and are always supplied with sentimental literature and rosebuds.

The person you mistook for the mummy Mark Twain so graphically described in his *Innocents Abroad* is worth a million dollars; and goes to town daily to superintend his real estate, and consult his lawyers as to the remote possibility of superintending his wealth beyond the extent of his present life; for he has no children, and is greatly concerned by what shall become of his great possessions when he lays himself down in a little two by six piece of his property—more, by the way, than he likes to make use of. But the lawyers do not hold out much comfort to him, while they put in their own pockets considerable.

There are misses on their way to school, dressed as if for a promenade concert, with pockets full of *chocolat meringue*, and thin white faces, and supercilious airs. There are young doctors and lawyers who carry suggestions of quinine and parchment in their satirical tongues and important behavior; and self-possessed, rather self-conscious lady professors; and sallow-faced, dyspeptic-looking journalists, sinecure office-holders, and old bachelors; and—good luck to them! may their number never decrease—a goodly multitude of sunny-tempered, kindly-natured journeyists, who have a smile for every familiar face, a joke for every little annoyance, a helping hand for every fellow-traveler, are never put out by wind or weather or detention; but make the time of travel a veritable jolly, social hour for all about them.

And, indeed, save to those who are familiar with this tear and tumble of daily travel, it is surprising what scores of acquaintances, what pleasant reunions and friendly intercourses are woven through the warp and weft of these morning and evening hours, wherein such crowds of workers travel to and from their half-life in town.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

UNSELFISH CHARACTERS.

It seems to me that there cannot be a more-to-be-envied individual, on one who can be more loveable than a person who is thoroughly and entirely unselfish, one who thinks more of aiding others than he does of himself; one who considers it not the least trouble in the world to help a person in misfortune, to open his heart and his pocket-book at the cry of distress, and that with no hope or prospect of compensation or reward. This specimen of humanity is so rare that it is dearer and more valuable to us when found. I wish we had more. The world would be much better if we were full of them. Scandals would soon die out. Instead of the motto "each for himself" it would be "each for one another." Such a motto as that carried into our daily life and duties, and acted upon, would soon make a change in the programme of our existence, it would brighten up the dark places, it would shed a halo round many a head; it would make a saint out of many a sinner; it would not only make you love others but would cause others to love you, it would make you better and feel better, because while you are helping others you are aiding yourselves.

See the Irish emigrants who come to this country; notice the sums of money they are constantly sending to the loved ones at home. A portion of their first wages is always sent to the "ould folks" to relieve them in their distress, or maybe to help pay their passage to this country. It is done from a purely unselfish motive; it is done from true love and affection for those who have done what they could for them, and if others only did the same for, one, believe it would have a more humanizing effect upon them.

You mistake me, exceedingly, if you think I am advising you to neglect yourselves entirely in order to aid others, for such a thing is far, very far, from my thoughts. But there are so many who have the means without having the inclination to serve others that it seems as if they ought to be read a lesson. You will do all in your power to secure the comfort of some rich person; you will fawn upon him, put up with his whims and caprices, deprive yourself of many a pleasure and will be praised for your goodness; yet, are you acting from unselfish motives? Isn't there hope in my awkward

mind that you will come in for a handsome, round sum when the will is opened and read? Would you do the same for the poor invalid who has neither gold or silver to leave behind him when gone—nay, not even so much as will pay for the plainest coffin? Would you be as unselfish as that? Would any one? Yes, I know of one, but you would pass her by in the street as not worthy of a second glance; you would style her nothing but a "horrid old maid."

Her face may be homely but her heart is more beautiful than any face could be; the marks and wrinkles that line her face are not thought of as she bends over the couch of some sufferer; the poor patient, poor in health as well as in pocket, looks on that face as one would look on the face of an angel. Old! Well, we must all be that if we live; her very age makes her kind and gentle, for she has seen sorrows and troubles enough to crush any woman, yet has survived them all and knows how to feel kindly for others. I grant you that she is an old maid, but that doesn't lower her in my estimation one single atom. She couldn't be any better if she were married, and she need not have led a single life unless she had so desired. She might have had home and wealth and a husband, for all were offered her, but she could not give up the care of an invalid who was dependent upon her. She never grieves at her loss and never murmurs at her fate. The one she has the care of is often cross and irritable, having fits of sulkiness that are very trying, while there are times when he seems to have lost all feeling of gratitude, but the woman never ceases her care, never swerves from her duty, for she knows the bed of an invalid is not strewn with roses and the poor patient—who is not so very patient after all—must grow weary of lying in bed while others are up and about.

And when the invalid's spirit wings its flight he will leave nothing but his debts to pay. There will be no money left for the "homely old maid"—nothing left but his debts to pay; you can see what a truly unselfish creature she is. I would there were more like her. Perhaps there are. Perhaps there are many going about doing the Master's work in a quiet, unostentatious way—a way that we all should follow. There may be earthly angels ministering to those in need of their kind and unselfish ministrations.

Why cannot we do the same? Why cannot I and you do good for the pure love of it and not for the sake of a reward? Are we such selfish creatures that we are not willing to do one generous action without the hope to gain some advantage by it? If so, then it is high time you and I turned over a new leaf, and the sooner that new leaf is turned over the better will it be.

EW LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

My Marriage.

I HAVE been hanging around Sarah Jane for a good while, and of late wanted to tell her that I loved her well enough to marry her, but I was afraid she might say she wouldn't do any such a thing, and that would have come pretty nearly making it hopeless; so I didn't hurry the matter.

I said that something must be done at last. I'd pine away; so I read all the novels I could borrow, to get an insight into the ceremony of popping the question, but found all the heroes were in the habit of throwing them selves down on their knees and pouring forth endless quotations of Shakespeare, and such; and I said I wasn't able for any of that.

One night I sat by her side while she was busily darning socks, when I mustered up courage enough to say: "Sally, do you know where I could get a steady little housekeeper to do my cooking and mend my clothes?"

She said she didn't really know, but mentioned one or two colored women in the neighborhood.

"No, Sally," said I, "what I want is to get married if I can find some girl that will have me; if I can't I won't, and that's all there is of it. Have you any notion of joining this procession of one through life?"

She said she hadn't thought much of it, only a little, and wanted to know when it was to start.

Said I, "Any day you will nominate."

She named a day a couple of months ahead. I stuck myself on two or three pins and a darning-needle, but kissed her, and felt as happy as an orphan with four or five parents.

But I had to get the old man's consent. I dreaded to pop the question to him, but it had to be done, so I watched a long time to catch him out alone. At last I met him, and asked, "Have you any objections to getting married, Mr. Swipes?"

"What's that, sir?" said he.

"I mean," I said, "have you any objections to me marrying Sally, or Sally marrying me, or both if necessary?"

The old man surveyed the toe of his right boot. I looked at it, too.

Then he looked up and said, "So you have been making love to our daughter, have you?"

This so frightened me that I was obliged to say, "Not a great deal, sir." Then he looked at his boot again, and I did likewise.

"That's a pretty piece of business," he thundered, while I kept my eye on his boot. "If you marry her, young man, you do so without my consent."

But I knew the old man was like a good many other fathers, mighty glad to have their girls married off, but would prefer not to show their satisfaction too abruptly, as it were.

When the day began to approach, the matter began to look more serious than at first. I had never been married before, and I felt the importance of my situation; besides the whole neighborhood was expected to be there, and I, too! This last was the most trying of all. I seriously wished I could get married by proxy.

If I had waked up in the heart of Africa that morning I would have been a happy man; and when the guests began to gather there, and the parson with them, I couldn't help thinking it was a funeral, and involuntarily looked out of the window for the hearse.

I never felt so lonesome in all my life. How was I to go in and stand up before all those people, like a culprit receiving his sentence to hung? I felt like everybody else but myself. I asked Sally if it was too late to postpone it until we were more used to it.

They said the preacher was waiting, and Sally took my arm, and I shook just as much as I wanted to, and asked nobody's consent.

Oh, how my new boots squeaked as we started in! and I forgot how they were pinching my feet. The crowd gave away as we went in, and I came near giving away, too. Gracious, but it was warm! It seemed to me that I wanted a cooling-board.

I didn't keep account of all the people I ran against while we were filing through the crowd, and of the toes I trod on, nor of the pinches Sally gave me on my arm for my awkward

ness. Then we brought up before the preacher, and I felt that I would rather be having my picture taken than to be standing there. Oh, yes, I was comfortable! That's no name for it.

The preacher coughed and made me jump, and asked, "Do you take this woman to be your lawful and wedded wife?" I said that was the understanding. Then he asked her if she would take me to be her lawful and wedded husband, and so forth; she said, "Yes," and he told me to join hands. I gave her my left hand, and the preacher tried to change them, and I took hold of his hand in the hurry of the moment, without looking.

This bored me till my very hair turned red, and I begged his pardon. Then he read the Declaration of Independence, the Riot Act, the Discipline of the Church, Robinson Crusoe, and I don't know what all, and at last pronounced us man and wife, or perhaps wife and man—I have since been led to think so.

I could almost swear he made us stand up there before all that crowd for two hours and a half—until I was thoroughly tired of getting married. I think I was the most married man that ever started into the business. I think it was his design to seal us so that even the divorce laws would fail to separate.

And then he said he would kiss the bride, and she actually let him. This made me so mad that I couldn't say a word, or I would have objected then and there, forthwith!

Then the parson said the folks would have a chance to come up and make fun at us, and congratulate us to death, and such a tumbling up and shaking of hands you never saw. I was shaken worse than ever.

It rather made me feel proud to know that there was a woman that belonged to me—although some little disputes have arisen since as to which belonged to the other, and it has never been definitely settled.

If I ever have the glorious privilege—I mean, if I ever have occasion to get married again—I would go through the ceremony with more grace and elegance than I displayed on that occasion.

I shall remember that day as long as I live. I have never had any reason to forget it. I don't think I could if I had. The only little difference between us has been that my wife insists that the word "obey" was left out, and I am almost sure it was.

And when the invalid's spirit wings its flight he will leave nothing but his debts to pay; you can see what a truly unselfish creature she is. I would there were more like her. Perhaps there are. Perhaps there are many going about doing the Master's work in a quiet, unostentatious way—a way that we all should follow.

MR. EDITOR.—I send you this by the fast mail train to ask you to withhold the copy and then she got hold of me, the undersigned. She impressed me with the idea that it must not be printed. There are times when I love to humor her whims; one of those times has come.

Topics of the Time.

It is said that President Lincoln once said to Senator F

A SCOTTISH FANCY.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

There's a quaint old Scottish fancy
That I read not long ago,
In a book of old fancies.
And it must be true, I know,
As I think, are many fancies
Old and strange, very sweet,
That we count as fancies only.
Or a poet's quaint conceit.

When a soul is going heavenward,
As it lingers, loth to go,
Then the ear grows deaf to discord
That has jarred upon it so,
And the heart grows soft to music
Which is made by wind and stream,
Mingling with celestial voices,
And to die is like a dream.

Then so runs the olden legend,
When the last of earth is come,
And the ear to earthly tumults
Has forevermore grown dumb,
Dying ones they bear out gently
Wh're among the flowers and grass
Summer-bells are singing softly,
Like a friar chancing mass.

Then they hear the brook's low music,
And the voices of the trees,
And the whirr of the waters,
And the murmur of the breeze.
And the voices of the angels
Blend with these, until it seems
That they steep the dying senses
In the Lotus-wine of dreams.

Is it not a pleasant fancy
When the end is drawing near,
And the love of those who'll miss me
Cannot longer keep me here?
Beneath the sun and voices
I have known and loved so well,
And the fabled pain of dying
Shall be banished by their spell.

Vials of Wrath:
THE GRAVE BETWEEN THEM.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "TWO GIRLS' LIVES," "LOVE-
BLIND," "OATH-BOUND," "BARBARA'S
FATE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DOUBLE DECEIVER.

ALTHOUGH, as has before been stated, Frank Havelstock had fully made up his mind to offer himself to Ida Wynne when the moment came in which he should find himself in the right humor; and while he had every reason to suppose that the girl whom he intended honoring with the name Theodore Lexington would give him, with the big slice of Tanglewood, still, there were moments when he actually wondered if there was a possibility of Ida's failing him. If she should, through any girlish freak, reject him—the very thought made Havelstock's eyes blaze with wrath, as he looked across the table at her, after Mrs. Lexington had taken her rather abrupt departure, prior to sending her note of warning to Vinc.

Ida was looking well that night—unusually well, in her white alpaca dress, with its vivid scarlet sash and the scarlet ivy berries in her glossy brown hair; a costume that seemed particularly appropriate for the cool October evening that had already drawn its dusk over the outside world.

She was pretty, stylish, graceful—and the means of great good luck to him; and yet, as he watched her fair, insipid face, so unlike Ethel Mary's, in all the fire of pride, and intelligence, and sweetness, he was conscious of a strange homesickness somewhere about his heart, that make him angry at himself for the weakness.

"A precious fool I am to suffer my thoughts to run on after a pretty face—even if it is the face of the only woman on earth who ever really touched my heart—and women always idolize me."

He could not banish the vivid memories that came rushing over him with a suddenness of force that surprised him. He could not shut out the picture of Ethel's beauty; the memory of her perfect trust in him, her wild worship of him, the grand, womanly purity and nobleness of her nature; and as he remembered it all—the blissful days when he and his bride had been all the world to each other—as he watched the face opposite him, that would so soon be invested with the right to remain opposite his as long as they both lived—he felt a deathly faintness seize him—a positive physical agony, caused by the brief yearning of his soul for what he had put forever from his hands.

Ida was busy with her ice-cream, and did not look up, else she would have seen a haggard face, on which stood beads of cold sweat; and Havelstock glared on her bowed head, almost diabolically.

"I believe I fairly loathe her! I believe I worship my bright-eyed Ethel this moment more madly than I ever did before! And yet—what disgusting bairlesque is it all!"

The mood did not last long—Ida dispelled it by laying down her spoon and napkin, and speaking to him, as she arose:

"Were you waiting for me to go? Or—may I pour your wine for you?"

She said it half timidly, in the fullness of her affection for him.

He could barely restrain an expression of hatred that sprung to his lips.

"Thank you—but I shall take no wine to-night. Will you go to the drawing-room?"

He gave her his arm, and she accepted it, little knowing the raging tumult within his breast, or the cold-blooded, heartless vow he registered to secure her plighted troth that hour, and have done with romancing.

But, he was not done with "romancing," if by that he meant the clashing thoughts, the divided wishes that swayed to and fro in his heart like angry billows driven by the lash of the winds. He could not help thinking; he was utterly powerless before the temporary rebellion of his thoughts.

"It is a desperate game—it has been so from the moment when I instructed Vinc to carry Ethel the news of my accidental death by drowning. If I marry Ida Wynne, I run a terrible risk. If ever my marriage with Ethel Mary is discovered, there will be no alternative but twenty years at Sing Sing. Dare I take the chances?"

He was absently turning the leaves of some new music on the piano rack, that Ida was playing, carelessly. His face was pale, care-worn, and his eyes full of anxious fear. He suddenly left the piano, followed by Ida's wondering eyes; he stepped through the French window, into the cool October night, that came refreshingly to his burning temples.

He took several turns up and down the marble-floored porch, with quick, hurrying footsteps, as if pursued by some unseen, avenging foes.

"It is impossible! there is no danger of my being found out—no possible danger. I shall lose my identity as Ethel's husband by assuming the name of Lexington, and to make assurance doubly sure, I shall drop my Chris-

tian name, and use my middle name—one that Ethel never heard of. As plain 'John Lexington,' who would ever dream of seeing Frank Havelstock, particularly when not one of my dear five hundred friends ever for a moment associated me with the unfortunate fellow whose death they may have casually glanced over in their papers at their breakfast-tables? Found out! There is not a chance in a thousand! what odd spell of nervousness could have so wrought upon me?"

He smiled now, triumphantly, his haggardness disappearing by magic, his black eyes all aglow again with exultation.

"I'll go in again to Miss Wynne, and make her the offer she will be so delighted to receive; and then, a speedy marriage and a long tour in Europe. Hello! what's up now?"

He added the astonished question suddenly, as he turned for a final promenade up the porch, before re-entering.

Hastening from the back entrance through the grounds, he recognized Philo, the son of Mrs Lexington's waiting-maid—a bright little fellow he had often employed himself to run of errands. He distinctly saw the envelope in the boy's hand, and he knew as well as if he had read it, that it was for Carleton Vinc.

A sinister smile was in his eyes, as he watched the rapid footsteps of the boy; then, he suddenly turned from the drawing-room window, at which he had purposed to enter, and passed quickly up the staircase, to the front room of Lexington's suite.

He entered without announcing himself, and found Lexington pacing the floor, white and haggard, as he had done since he left Georgia's presence, an hour before.

He paused abruptly as Havelstock came in, with his face full of pity, and his manner that of a man who performs, perforce, a disagreeable duty.

"Look out the end window, Lexington. Do you see? Forgive me, I beg, but is it not my duty, as your nearest, truest friend, to put you on your guard, even at risk of your pleasure?"

He locked his arm affectionately in Lexington's, and stood with him, while they both looked after the still distinguishable figure of Georgia's messenger. Lexington turned his blazing eyes on Havelstock.

"Is it Philo? He conveys a message to Mrs. Lexington's lover?"

His voice was husky as he spoke; and Havelstock distinctly heard the heavy, rapid strokes of his heart.

"It is Philo, I fear. He has a letter—I saw it plainly; but do not judge Georgia too harshly, I beg. Remember, there is the possibility of a mistake; remember, if the boy is Philo, without doubt, and even if he does carry a letter, it may be to Georgia's seamstress, or to the druggist."

Lexington laid his hand on Havelstock's shoulder.

"You are so charitable, Frank, so ready to look on the bright side of everything, and so anxious to bridge this chasm between me and the woman who has disgraced me. You are the truest friend man ever had, and may God reward you as you served me."

Havelstock felt a silent contempt for his victim—the grand, noble heart whose fountain of nature he was poisoning so foully. But he experienced no thrill of awe or fear at Lexington's invocation on his head.

"However—peacemaking will not avail now, Frank," he went on, bitterly. "I have every reason to know that Georgia is a guilty, deprav—"

Havelstock interrupted him vehemently.

"I can't listen to that—I never will believe it of Georgia. She may be imprudent—in deepest pain and pity I am obliged to think she is—but the sinful woman you make her out—never, never! Yet—that letter to-night—Lexington, for Heaven's sake don't ask me a question ever again on this subject."

His countenance wore a look of indignation, yet sorrowful compassion, and Lexington thought what a nobleman he was—what a friend he was to even poor, poor Georgia.

"Was I harsh, Lexington?" he asked, after a second's pause, gently. "I did not mean to be a second's pause, gently. "I did not mean to be, you must know. I was thinking how strangely the facts in the case conflict. You must not forget, Lexington, before you pass judgment, that Georgia has been very lonely at Tanglewood, all the past year; that she is as beautiful as a painter's dream ideal, and that it is not the most unnatural result in the world that her lover should worship her, that—that—"

Lexington was falling headlong into the trap so wily set for him. His rage and jealousy were all afire again, just as Havelstock intended they should be, while no blame attached to himself.

Now, Lexington interrupted him with a hoarse cry.

"Worship her—you think he worships her; Frank, I'd give a thousand dollars this minute for her lover's name—whose picture I saw her kissing so passionately an hour ago! By all that's sacred, his life wouldn't be worth that hand, having none to meet!"

He snapped in two a match, as he spoke.

"How could he help it—whether it is whom Georgia favors—if she favors any one? Lexington, prove what I have said to be true! prove your wife's innocence, by watching this once and finding that she does not meet her lover, having none to meet!"

He interrupted her promptly.

"And then, my fortunate successor would hurl all the vials of his wrath on your pretty head. He would vent all his rage and jealousy at you until your life would be a worse horror than it is now. He would hate you ten thousand times more than he does now if he learned that his supposed rival was your first divorced husband."

Georgia listened in dumb surprise at his information.

"He is all fire and intensity—isn't he—this handsome Apollo of yours? He never quite forgave you for palming yourself off as an honorable widow when you were really a divorced woman; and you never quite forgave him for tearing my child from your arms and letting it die the awful death it must have suffered by neglect and starvation."

Georgia's face whitened with mortal anguish and she clasped her hands imploring mercy.

"Oh, don't don't! My baby has been an angel for years and years while I have been enduring such terrible pangs—let her memory rest. I loved her, if she was your child."

The contempt that was inferred more plainly than expressed in her words, galled him to the very core.

"And I love you, if you are what you say you are, and the man's wife. Do you hear that, my proud beauty? Can you reconcile this confession with the curses I hurled on you when I saw you last? Can you appreciate the paradox, that, though we are sworn foes to each other, I am more madly in love with you than ever I was before?"

Her flushed face was turned slightly away, but he felt her frame tremble beside him.

"A few minutes only, was it? It seemed much longer to me."

He pressed her arm with his, as she said that.

"Then you must care for my society, Ida!

Surely you would not find time hang on your hands in my absence if you did not care a little for me. Do you?"

He was not at all ardent; there was nothing eager in his voice, but Ida's heart was leaping exultantly, and her voice quivered with genuine happiness as she answered, lowly:

"I do care for your society, Mr. Havelstock. I think most women would."

A smile of complacency gleamed a moment in his eyes; he fully agreed with her, and

thought, at the same time, what a flat, stale love-making this was. But he was in for it, and he went on, very creditably.

"I don't care for such a confession—you know I don't. I want you to look at me and say, 'Frank, I love you,' because, Ida, I love you dearly, and want you to promise to be my little wife soon—very soon."

Ida paused in a silent ecstasy of delight; then raised her pleased, blushing face.

"I do love you, Frank. I never cared for any one before; did you?"

"Never, my darling. You are the only woman I ever saw to whom I was in the least attracted. Kiss me, Ida—a sign and seal of our betrothal."

Her lips met his freely, fully, and as an exquisite magnetic thrill quivered over Ida from head to foot at that first, sweet caress, Frank Havelstock experienced a feeling of shrinking coldness, as he remembered the kisses of Ethel Mary, warm, clinging, soulful, as she nestled to him, and looked all her passionate love out of her dusky eyes.

So his new life began—fair enough to see, promising enough in the bud; but oh! the fruit that was to turn to gall on his lip!

CHAPTER XXXI

BLOW IN THE FACE.

A SINGLE step after Georgia crossed the threshold of the kiosk, brought her face to face with Carleton Vinc, who emerged from the shadows and confronted her in sullen, wrathful silence.

His slouched hat was jammed over his forehead in attempt at disguise, if by chance any one should see him, by whom he did not care to be recognized.

His eyes were full of decisive mercilessness, as they glowed redly as they looked on Georgia's graceful figure, clad in the dark blue cloak; as they took in every detail of her pure, fair, worried face, with its somber, pious eyes of dusk, its glorious hair, that seemed caressing the shapely head and intellectual temples, from which Georgia had pushed back the hood of her waterproof.

"I thought it was best to come—for Lexington's sake as well as my own. I have brought you money—a great deal, to buy my peace by your absence."

His eyes lighted greedily.

"Money—eh? a couple of hundred dollars, maybe! You're a sensible woman, Georgia, but I'm not to be caught by such small bait as that. Money? did you ever know a fellow to refuse to close with a bargain if he was well paid for doing it?"

Georgia shrank a step further back, as Vinc approached step nearer; his brandy-flavored breath warming her face as he hurriedly responded.

"Will you swear to go away from Tanglewood and never be seen in its vicinity again? Will you swear to make no future attempt to see me, or my husband, so long as you live?"

She spoke in an intensely passionate way that lent new beauty to her eloquent face. Vinc watched the play of her perfect features, with a sinister, tigerish delight on his own countenance; then, after a moment of apparent deepest consideration, he answered:

"I will swear to all you have said—for a thousand dollars, cash down. Does that suit you? If my demand seems large, remember you have plenty of money wherever to buy your caprices, while I—am a poor devil who lives on my wits."

Georgia assented calmly, with a thrill of thankfulness; that she had that exact amount in her pocket; although, had Vinc demanded more as the price of her safety, she would have stripped off her watch, her chain, her diamonds that hung like prisoned suns in ice, from her dainty ears, and glittered at her throat. Her hand trembled as she laid the two rolls of money on the table beside her, and pushed them silently across to him.

He took them with a low, satisfactory laugh, and thrust them in his pocket.

"You always were truthful, Georgia, so that I need not count these notes to see if there are the thousand dollars you say there are."

She drew up her hand over her hair hurriedly.

"Remember I have your sworn word that I am never to be molested again—or, my family; so that this is a final farewell."

She turned hastily to leave the kiosk, but he had been expecting such a move, and very effectually prevented her egress by stepping exactly in the doorway.

"Don't be in a hurry, Georgia. You must think I am a stock or a stone to let you go with only this brief business interview to remember you by. Suppose you sit down, and give me a little insight into your life."

He motioned toward the ornamented bronze settle opposite the door, with a smile that curled her blood.

"I cannot remain a moment longer. They will miss me at the house, and then—"

He interrupted her promptly.

"And then, my fortunate successor would hurl all the vials of his wrath on your pretty head. He would vent all his rage and jealousy at you until your life would be a worse horror than it is now. He would hate you ten thousand times more than he does now if he learned that his supposed rival was your first divorced husband."

Georgia listened in dumb surprise at his information.

"He is all fire and intensity—isn't he—this handsome Apollo of yours? He never quite forgave you for palming yourself off as an honorable widow when you were really a divorced woman; and you never quite forgave him for tearing my child from your arms and letting it die the awful death it must have suffered by neglect and starvation."

Georgia's face whitened with mortal anguish and she clasped her hands imploring mercy.

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not help a little quiver of repugnance as he clasped the cold, moist hand. But the chief seemed satisfied as he rode away toward the encampment.

Through all this Keoxa remained quietly seated upon his horse, his dark eyes reading every change of the young man's face. When the chief retired, he spoke:

"The tongue is soft, but the heart is blacker than the painted face. He will strike from the grass without warning. Let White Lightning watch where he steps, and sleep with his eyes open."

"Others have teeth as well as he, and know how to use them, too. But let that pass. My brother heard what he said—that you were my captive, to deal with as I please. But he was wrong, for you are free and your own master. The trail is open for you, only—let the trail be a long one between this and night. The wolves are swift-footed and thirst for the blood of a warrior."

"The trail shall be a broad one if they choose to follow. Keoxa is young, and there is room for more scalps on his lodge-pole," was the quiet reply.

"My brother, hearken, You have heard of Quanbli, the Great Eagle of the Comanches; when he takes the warpath, his braves are like the sands of the desert. The Eagle has only one child, Keoxa, who will be the head of the Snake Children when the great chief dies. Then, as now, Keoxa will have two brothers, White Lightning and Silent Tongue. His life belongs to them, as well as the lives of every Comanche. They have only to speak and their wishes shall be made good. See—the Wolf-Children have left me little but my skin;" at the same time removing his girdle and cutting it in halves.

"This will do until we meet again. Bear this with you wherever you go. Show it to any of my tribe and they will give you their lives without a question."

"My brother sets too high a value on what we have done," replied Jack Rabbit, after a brief pause.

"We set you free, that is true, but it was for our own good alone. We did not know you then, else it would have been different. We only saw you one who might be able to serve us, not a friend and brother.

The words seem hard and cold now, but they are true to our thoughts then. For years we had fought the Comanches, and never expected to find a dear brother among them.

"Listen. We have dear friends among our people, in that train. You see the trap set around them. The wolves speak soft, but I can see that they are sharpening their teeth for a feast of blood. I have sworn to save my people or die with them, yet my heart was heavy, for I could see little hope. Then my eyes saw my brother—yes, I said: life is sweet to the young. One who fought so well should not be left to die beneath the foul claws of the Wolf-Children. I said: I will set him free and then ask a favor of him. You are free—this is the favor."

"The Mad Chief and his wolves are your enemies; Comanche blood stains this land. Wash out this stain with the muddy water that flows in their own veins. Ride swiftly to your people, call upon your braves, bid them prepare for a long, hard ride, tell them that your brothers are looking anxiously for their coming. This is what I ask of Keoxa."

"If the duty was harder, Keoxa would be more glad, but he promises. Listen, brother. It is two days' and nights' hard ride to my people. When the sun goes by four times, you will hear the war-cry of the Snake Children."

The conversation was prolonged for some minutes longer, during which signals and other minor items were arranged, besides the young chief explaining the cause of his being found in such an humble position under the renegade.

It seemed that true love can find its way into the skin lodges of the desert inhabitants as well as the haunts of civilization. Keoxa loved and proved successful in his wooing, but on the third night after the soft-eyed Snake child came to his lodge, he held a corse in his arms. His heart crushed with grief, Keoxa wandered away into the desert, and falling in with the renegade, eagerly joined his marauding party as a simple brave.

The new-made friends parted, the young chief riding swiftly away over the desert, the comrades returning to the "trap." They knew the buffalo-hunters cheerful and unsuspecting, busily engaged in repairing their wagons and harness after the long, hard desert journey. As agreed upon, the friends did not say anything to alarm the traders.

The chief was consoling Don Raymon and his wife, whose anxiety for the safety of their children increased with every hour of their absence. He declared that his braves would speedily return with the lost ones. Raymon half decided to set forth himself, but was finally dissuaded. Perhaps he would have been more obstinate had he not discovered that at least one sincere friend was upon the trail, and had been for hours, though his absence had not been suspected until that morning. Who this friend was the reader shall soon learn.

Pondering over the complicated situation in which he found himself, Jack Rabbit lay upon the grass in the shade of a towering mass of rock. Not only was his own life in danger, but, if the vague words of Tony Chew were to be believed, so were those of others who should be very dear to him. And while racking his brain to solve the enigma, a light footfall caught his attention. Glancing up, he saw Mini Lusa, a finger pressed upon her red-ringed lips, standing beside him.

That Jack was no coward, many a wild and daring deed bore ample evidence, yet in that moment, while those glorious eyes were beaming down upon him, he colored and trembled like the veriest schoolboy detected in mischief by the stern eye of his teacher.

"Why do you linger here, wasting the minutes that should be used in carrying you far from this spot?" came the low, guarded tones, as the maiden cast a wary glance around.

"My friends are here," stammered Jack, scarce knowing what he said.

"Are they worth dying for—or rather with?"

The bravest man may retreat without shame, when he can only die by remaining, without doing any good. You are brave—you proved that, out yonder—but if you remain here, you must die. Fly while you can—to-morrow will be too late. You are warned—be wise and save your life for the sake of those who are dear to you."

She abruptly paused and glided away as the tall form of the Mad Chief drew near, leaving Jack most deliciously bewildered.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HALF-BREED'S WOOING.

BLACK GAROTE made but a short day's journey, after capturing Rosina and Pablo Raymon, going into camp before the sun set. During the day, the young buffalo-hunter lay, bound and helpless, in the bottom of one of the rough, jolting carretas. Rosina was permitted to ride, but the half-breed was never more than arm's-length from her bridle rein, as though he feared the bird he prized so highly

would take to wing and fly away over the desert, never more to return.

His men, rude, uncouth fellows enough, laughed and joked among themselves at the evident infatuation of their doughty chief; but Black Garote never noticed them. Other eyes, too, were upon them, with anything but an amiable look. White teeth grated angrily together, a little paw sought the bone-handled dagger that lay hidden in a hot, heaving bosom; all through that long, weary day, only a wonderful exercise of self-denial prevented the Indian woman from springing upon her rival—for what woman could long resist the noble, the superb Garote!—and ending all with one swift, sure stroke that should send the trusty blade down through that fair bosom, to the heart that was gradually softening toward Garote—her Garote.

As the night came down, the camp-fires blazed up cheerily, shining upon the gray rocks, reflecting from the tiny stream that winds its way through the crags and moss-grown boulders. Only one little dingy skin marked the spot. Until now this had been sacred to the use of Black Garote and the Indian woman; the other men had left their women behind them.

Before the swaying blanket that had served the purpose of a door, sat Rosina, preferring the rudely-admiring gaze of the hunters to the risking a private *tele-a-tete* with Garote. That worthy crouched at her feet, urging her to eat.

"You need not be afraid, little one," he laughed, shortly. "The girl has clean hands, if nothing else. Eat—you will need all your strength before you see your people again."

"You will take us back to-morrow? We will say nothing—only that you were very kind to us, and took much trouble to restore us to our friends. Do this—you shall never regret it. We are not rich, but you shall be well paid for your trouble."

It was with difficulty that Rosina schooled herself to speak these words in a quiet, even tone; but whatever faint hope she may have had, vanished at the coarse laugh and coarse words of the half-breed.

"Yes, my reward would be a curse and perhaps a kick—I know Felipe Raymon well. He is so proud because he can tell who his father and grandfather was—of his 'blue blood.' And yet he is no more than I—a poor cibolero. Take you back? Am I a fool? Do you remember the last time we met—at your home? I came then, a man, good as the best in the land; a man who can hold his own with the best hunter, the surest *rastreador*, boldest rider—the equal of any, unless it be in not having a smooth, baby face. I came to ask for you—as a wife. What was my answer? He—your father—set his poens on me, had me kicked into the ditch and chased for miles by his dog. You see, I have not forgotten!"

Rosina sat in silence after this outburst. She realized how utterly vain words would be, and a cold, sickening dread crept over her heart as she realized how utterly she was at the mercy of this brutal, vengeful being.

"These are not the words I meant to speak," added the half-breed, choking down his angry recollections with an effort. "You forced them from me by bringing up the past. If you are wise, you will be more careful. Though I love you—stop! You must listen to me. Where can you go? These men are all my own, and at a sign from me would wring your pretty neck, and never sleep a wink the worse after. I warned Felipe Raymon that my time would come; and this is it."

"You are here at my mercy. I can use you as I see fit. And yet I will be generous, Once more—will you be my wife?"

"Never—a thousand times no!" cried Rosina, her cheek flushing, her eyes flashing angrily.

"Wait; never is a long word, and easier spoken than lived up to. Let me give you some reasons for saying yes. As I hinted, before, I have the power to make you what the woman yonder, Paquita, is—which would be worse than becoming my wife with the priest's blessing.

"Then—think of your brother. He is young, and life is sweet to him, no doubt. I believe you love him, too. For his sake, then, you will give me the promise I ask."

"He would curse me were I weak enough—"

"You don't give me credit for half my power," and the half-breed laughed viciously.

"I think I can soon win him over to my side, and even cause him to beg that you will marry me. Does that surprise you? Listen:

"I said these men were mine, body and soul. Two of them are pure Indians; all of them have red blood in their veins. Torturing a prisoner will come natural to them. Every evening I will ask you that question. If you refuse, you shall sit by me and watch my men at work, listen to the shrieks and groans of your brother as he prays you to have pity on him. Ha! that touches you!"

Rosina shuddered and leaned back against the lodge, faint and heart-sick. The fiendish words of the brutal half-breed filled her with terror such as she had never felt before. Alone, helpless in his power, her situation was indeed miserable.

The half-breed continued, but his words sounded faintly upon her ear, without conveying any understanding.

"You know now what to expect. I have threatened no more than I can perform—no more than I will do if you continue obstinate. On the other hand, if you are sensible and make me the promise—swear to become my wife in an oath that I know you will never dare to break—you shall be treated with all respect and kindness, you and your brother. I will take you at once to the Mission San Saba, where the holy fathers can satisfy even your scruples."

"But enough now. You can think over my words to-night. This tent is yours. No one shall enter it without your permission. Go in, now; and consider well what I have said."

The moment she had served the rude viands, Black Garote had motioned the Indian woman, Paquita, away. From a distance she had watched them, the hot, mad jealousy rising in her bosom until her eyes glowed like those of an enraged cat, as she saw how eager the half-breed grew, how animated his gestures were, how utterly forgotten was his wonted indolent laziness. Though the words were inaudible to her, Paquita could easily follow his speech, so mobile had passion rendered his features, and the strong, white teeth fairly met in the red, full lip unnoticed in her suffocating hatred. Not against him, though he had so utterly forgotten as to make hot love to another woman beneath her very eyes. All of her hatred was for Rosina—and that hatred deepened as she saw how the maiden shrank back from the eager half-breed, a look of fear and loathing upon her pale face. It was then that Paquita grasped her knife and stole nearer the couple, crouching down close beside the lodge, her ears eagerly drinking in the words of the half-breed, her hot passion rising higher with every moment, until she could scarce refrain from springing upon the woman who had robbed

her of his love, and driving the biting steel deep down to the very depths of her cold heart. Fortunately for them all, Black Garote said his say, and motioning Rosina to enter the ledge, he turned away and rejoined his men.

Paquita came and crouched beside her lord and master as he lay beside the glowing fire, so grateful to his tropical nature, keeping him supplied with tiny cigarettes. The cibolero lazily laughed as he watched the bronzed, comely face. She was taking it easy, he thought, little guessing what a whirlpool of passion was concealed beneath that calm exterior.

One by one the men rolled their blankets around them and lay down to sleep. A guard had been set, but it was little more than a matter of form, since they were at peace with the Indians, by virtue of their calling. And so, from a sitting posture against the gray boulder, the sentinel soon lay at full length, fast buried in sleep.

The moon rolled on, and the little valley was cast into deep shadow by the towering rock-wall. The fires had died out. The sleeping figures grew more and more indistinct.

The sentinel was soundly sleeping. Had he been awake and fully alert, he would have heard a peculiar sound—the yelping bark of a coyote, faint and subdued, as though coming from a distance. His eyes would probably have wandered up upon the desert, possibly having rested upon the dark, shadow-like shape creeping along so slowly, each moment drawing nearer his position. A hungry coyote, most likely, drawn thither by the hope of finding a stray bone.

Never and nearer the shadow came, never deviating from a direct course—in this alone differing from the prowling, restless wolf. The sleeping sentinel breathed deeply, as though to guide the midnight marauder.

A light cloud passed over the moon. When the soft light once more bathed the earth, the shadow had disappeared. Perhaps it had slunk back into the desert again.

And yet—faint, rustling sound came from the inside of the little valley. A slight puff of wind whirled between the rocks and blows the white ashes of a still smoldering brand. For a moment the red coal gleams out brightly, flickering into a tiny blaze. Again the sentinel missed a curious sight.

As the coal burst into flame, a dark figure sunk down amid the prostrate forms of the buffalo-hunters, and lay like one dead. But there was a quick glimmer of bared steel—then once again all was silent and dark.

Slowly the figure raised its head, and glared around, the eyes shining through the gloom with a phosphorescent light. All was still. Then, as if reassured, the shadow moved slowly away from the slumbering ciboleros, its progress silent as that of a serpent leisurely gliding over the sandy waste.

It paused beside the tent, cautiously passing a hand over the door-flap. This was securely pinned down, and after a moment's fumbling at the pegs, the shadow passed around the ledge into the deeper shadow.

The keen knife was brought into play. With admirable skill, a triangular cut was made in the tight skin. A moment's pause—then the shadow crept into the tent.

The sentinel abruptly ceased his snoring and moved restlessly, uttering a few incoherent words in his sleep. Like magic a shadow arose beside him; a broad palm lowered above his parted lips, a sinewy arm was uplifted for a moment, then descended with a dull, ominous *thud*. Though death-stricken, the brawny cibolero sprung half erect, a hoarse, gurgling cry bursting from his lips as the long blade was drawn from his heart.

The death-cry was drowned by a long, shrill yell—a dozen throats uniting in the terrible war-cry, and the desert seemed alive with it.

A piercing shriek of pain or terror came from the little tent.

CHAPTER XII.

KNIGHTS OF THE DESERT.

The remainder of that day and night passed by without any occurrence of especial note to our friends at the circular valley.

With every hour the Mad Chief found it a harder matter to keep Felipe Raymon from starting forth in search of his children. As yet nothing had been heard from the Pawnee who had first taken the trail, and the bereaved one's hopes were gradually growing less and less, though never once did they suspect that the chief was playing them false.

Jack confided to Tony the startling words of Mini Lusa. The old man, after a moment's self-communion, spelled upon his fingers:

"Get her to speak plainer. She will if you ask it, as you can ask. We can't sneak away from them, and every point will help."

But Jack was unable to carry out this plan.

If Mini Lusa had not left the encampment, he might so close that an interview was impossible.

During this scene of almost demoniacal revelry, Jack Rabbit and Tony stood on guard, half expecting the signal which should herald the massacre; but the hour had not yet come.

Soon after daylight the sports began. The majority of the buffalo-hunters joined right willingly; after their long, tedious journey, any relaxation had a double charm. There were races, both with horses and afoot. In the latter, the ciboleros were generally the victors, for the Pawnees only show to advantage when mounted. There followed lasso fights, mock contests with blunted spears and arrows, during which the contestants exhibited remarkable skill and wonderful horsemanship.

Leaning idly against the rocks, though their horses were near, saddled and bridled ready for work, Jack and Tony watched the sports with little interest. They knew that after this farce must come the tragedy.

The Pawnee chief half reclined upon a pile of robes placed over a boulder, coldly observing the movements of those below. His programme had been thoroughly arranged, and every motion of his hand was understood and carried out by his dusky *aidés*.

Beside him sat Mini Lusa, holding the strangely ornamented wand that denoted her rank as medicine-woman. A richly embroidered scarf of silk was hung over her shoulders. Many a long eye rested upon it, for all knew that when the sports of the day ended the brave that displayed the greatest skill and address would be called upon to receive the scarf from the fair hands of Running Water.

"The old man is watching us close as a hawk does a sage rabbit," muttered Jack to his comrade. "If we want to keep his eyes full of dust we've got to do something besides sitting here like two bums on a log. You don't mind, old man Tony?"

"It's the girl, rather," quickly spelled Chew,

smiling grimly. "Take care; she comes of treacherous stock."

Jack rode forward without any reply. A lull in the exercises favored him, and all eyes were turned upon the young man as he rode before the chief, bowing low as he dropped his sombrero to the prophetess.

His request was promptly granted, and Jack was soon in the possession of bow and quiver, spear and buffalo-hide shield. The curiosity of all was aroused as the Mad Chief arose and stated that the two friends would give a scene from desert life—a duel between the red-skin and pale-face.

Jack Rabbit dropped all superfluous clothing, placing them, together with his rifle and pistols, near the center of the arena, where a sudden dash would regain them, in case the chosen moment for the tragedy should be at hand. Chew simply looked to his pistols, then awaited the signal.

What followed can hardly be described. The discovery, the cautious advance, the brief pantomime, the yell and the charge. How the red-skin—as represented by Jack—circled round and round the pale-face, clinging to the mane and saddle, now discharging an arrow from beneath his animal's neck, now under his belly, now springing upright with a shrill yell, clashing spear and shield together as though seeking to draw his rival's fire.

At length the rifle cracked—and yelling triumphantly, the Indian charged direct for his enemy. Standing firm as a rock, the borderer raised his arm and his revolver began to speak. Swinging from side to side, dexterously handling his shield

all his earthly possessions, for he now felt more deeply his love for the fair girl.

Shortly after sunrise the youth bid farewell to his friends and started on his long and perilous trip, through a hostile section of the country, for Fort Detroit. He was accompanied only by his faithful dog. He carried the valuable paper which he had taken from the British spy sewed into the lining of his moccasin.

Long Beard walked with the youth to the edge of the woods, about a mile from the post, and when they were about to separate, he said:

"Now, Harry, my dear boy, do be careful. Don't trouble the savages or English. Make it a point to evade them as much as possible."

"Great hoppin' hornits, general," replied the youth, with a smile upon his flushed face, "I want to try my new gun on a red-skin the first chance I get, I do for a fact."

"Try it upon a bird or deer."

"Never, general; I prize a bird in the market above a red-skin or Britisher, I do for a zoological fact. The birds have been my dearest companions these many years, and not a feather would I harm unless absolutely necessary. But, general, don't give yourself a moment's uneasiness 'bout me. You have trouble enough of your own, and if they exchange Kirby Kale and ole Mucklewee, Lord only knows what will come to you, general. But rest assured I'll take care of Harry, for I'm in my element now. Yes, give me the woods every time; I don't like the water; it's not as solid a footin' as it is on land; besides, there's nothin' to hide behind—no shade, no birds to sing to me, no squirrels to chatter—no nothin', but water, below, sky above, and uncertainty all around. No, no, general; give me the woods every time. I never grow tired of that same old song it's been singin' these hundreds and hundreds of years. But, govenir, I must bid you good-by and be off. Time is precious."

"When will you be back, Harry?"

"That bird on yonder limb can answer as well as I. I may be back soon; I may not be back for a year; I may never be back. But no difference, govenir; that's nobody dependin' on me. I will go by my old home in the woods, the cabin of Davy Darrett; I will take old Davy with me, for he is a brave old codger and knows every foot of ground along St. Clair. I hope you will git rid of that lower regioner, Kirby Kale, and that you may live a long and happy life yet; I do for a sublime fact."

"Thank you, Harry; thank you."

"Well, good-by, Big Beard," the lad said, extending his hand.

"Good-by, Harry; may God guide and protect you through all the dangers that beset your path."

Tears rolled up into the lad's eyes as he turned away. To prevent an outbreak of feeling, he broke into a run and hurried on, never daring to look back until he was out of sight of Long Beard; then he slackened his pace to a walk.

"Here we are again, ole dog, alone in the woods," he said, brushing away the mist from his eyes. "It seems kind a-natural, don't it, old friend? The birds, and the squirrels, and the wind whistling among the trees, and the droning around us—great hornits! who says it isn't music, sweet music?"

Presently the youth began his favorite amusement of calling the birds around him through his power of imitation. A robin was the first to answer his call. It perched itself high in a tree-top, but when assured that it had nothing to fear, it descended closer. Then, one by one, came other winged songsters, until nearly a score had gathered around him. They took their position among the branches of the green-robbed trees; and as he moved on, they followed him, singing, chattering, and chirruping in concert. Now and then a squirrel frisked out of a gnarled old oak, and regarding the passing youth and his escort of songsters with a look of apparent delight, sent forth a sharp bark that rung clearly through the woods.

And thus for hours the youth journeyed on through the great forest, the birds following—some dropping out of the ranks and others joining. And as he was now approaching the enemy's country, he watched the birds closer and closer. Long associations with them had taught him their habits and peculiarities. He knew by their movements whether danger was about or not.

The sun had long since crossed the meridian, and the shadows of evening were gathering. The last bird had deserted the youth, and, instead of the music of the feathered tribe, the hoot of an owl rung upon his ears. This was suddenly followed by the tramp of hoofed feet and jingle of military trappings. Armed horsemen were approaching through the woods, but Harry knew not whether they were friends or foes. Belshazzar pricked up his ears and whined uneasily.

"Hist, Bell!" exclaimed the youth in an undertone; "some one's comin' git away from here—into the woods, ole dog, for I'm goin' to climb this tree and hide. Away, Bell, away!" and he motioned the dog away toward the south.

The sagacious animal seemed to comprehend, and at once scampered away, and Harry, slinging his rifle at his back by means of a strap attached for that purpose, climbed a huge oak tree with low, far-branching limbs, and ensconced himself among the dense foliage on a bough about ten feet from the main trunk and twice the distance from the ground.

He had scarcely done so, and the foliage around him was still rustling from his movements, when a number of mounted soldiers in the English uniform appeared in sight.

Happy Harry was almost afraid to breathe, for he at once discovered that the soldiers were a squad of the king's cavalry, and the advance guard of an invading army. Of this he was positive, for he could hear, in the distance, the tramp of the army, the rumble of artillery and baggage wagons, the blows of axes clearing a way through the woods for the teams, the commands of authoritative voices, and the general confusion of sounds incidental to a moving army.

To Harry's surprise and fear the detachment of cavalry drew rein within a few rods of where he was concealed, and the officer in command said:

"We will wait here until the main column comes up. It will require some time to bridge that creek, and so by the time they get across it will be time to go into camp. This will be a favorable spot for an encampment."

So saying they dismounted, and just about sunset Major-General Brock and staff rode up at the head of the advancing army.

"Have you selected grounds suitable for an encampment, colonel?" demanded Brock of the cavalry officer.

"This spot, general, is the most favorable one convenient," replied the colonel.

"Then here we will halt," replied the general.

Harry heard every word, and it almost chilled the blood in his veins.

The army soon came up, and was halted upon the grounds surrounding the tree in which our hero was ensconced. A baggage wagon was drawn up near the huge oak, and a number of tent equipments removed therefrom preparatory to being erected for the accommodation of the officers.

General Brock selected a spot directly under the very limb upon which the boy was perched, and ordered his tent pitched upon it; and as a number of men proceeded to work, Harry's heart almost ceased to beat through fear of detection.

The tent was a large conical structure about ten feet in height at the apex, which reached well up among the limbs. It required but a few minutes to prepare it for occupation, and, thanks to the providential shadows that lurked among the foliage, Harry was not discovered. But he was in for a night there in the tree, and in a position, too, that might prove more than his endurance could bear.

The deeper shadows of night proved a great relief to the boy, and he gradually settled himself into a more comfortable position. The soldiers lighted no fires. They feasted their hunger on cold provisions, and slaked their thirst at the little stream that rippled close by. The low murmur of voices rose on all sides. The animals were hitched here and there to trees and bushes, and given their proverber on the ground. The harness and saddles had not been removed for fear of surprise. The whole camp was a continuous stir of mingled life and sounds, and a relief to Harry; for the stamping of hoofed feet, the rustling of bushes and the clinking of harness chains served to drown any noise that he might make.

Suddenly a faint ray of light pierced the gloom within a few feet of his face. It came from a small, round hole in the very top of the British commander's tent, and the lad could not resist the temptation to lean slightly forward and peer down through the hole. He saw a lamp burning on a small stand, and before it sat General Brock and two of his officers on camp stools, examining a map that was spread upon the general's knees. He could see their faces but indistinctly. He could hear the murmur of their voices, but could only make out a word now and then.

At length, however, one of the general's aids-de-camp appeared at the door of the tent, and said in a tone quite audible:

"General, pardon my intrusion, but there is an Indian chief at the door desiring an audience with you."

"Of what tribe?" inquired the general, a little crustily as being disturbed.

"Of all tribes, general; it is the great Tecumseh."

The general started as if at a hostile shot. He rose to his feet, and as he folded the map that was spread upon the general's knees. He could hear the murmur of their voices, but could only make out a word now and then.

"Order! order!" thundered General Brock.

"Have you forgotten men, that you are soldiers of the English crown? Shame for such conduct; he is but a boy, not the American Indian!"

This merited rebuke at once restored order, then Brock led the boy into the tent of one of his generals and questioned him regarding his presence there.

The youth talked in such a childish, frivulous manner, the commandant came to the conclusion that he was a little runaway Yankee, who had become imbued with the spirit of some hero of a fireside story, and had rambled forth to seek renown in the great wildwood. Brock did not suspect him of having dealt Dindie the wound upon the head, from which the surgeon feared there was no recovery. All had seen the soldier climb into the tree, but the fact that the boy was there at the time, was no evidence to the general that he—Harry—had dealt the blow. His natural conclusion was that Dindie had received his injuries by his fall. However, as the youngster was in their power, the commandant concluded to retain him, for while he appeared to be not overly stocked with common sense, he might be thoughtful enough to give the Americans some information that would be of interest to them.

Harry acted as thoughtless and simple before the general as was consistent with his purpose and nature. It was his only recourse to outwit the English, although it was difficult for him to throw the look into his unusually intellectual face that should necessarily correspond with his rambling talk.

He was confined in an ambulance and a guard placed over him. He was not bound, as it was thought that the presence of the guard was all that would be necessary to keep him in his place. The watch took his position in the forpart of the prison-vehicle. He sat down upon the driver's seat with his gun at his side. Harry occupied the rear end of the carriage, and soon after he was placed therein, he began whistling sharply as if calling a dog.

"Shut up that noise or I'll slap you," vociferated his angelic guard. But Harry had accomplished his purpose—he had called up Belshazzar, who came bounding from the woods to the side of the vehicle in which he was confined.

"Let him in, Englisher; poor ole Bell's tired," said Harry, to his guard. "He's my friend; he's a bully ole dog, he is for a fact."

"Let him stay where he is," growled the amiable guard, and Harry had to obey.

The dog laid down under the carriage, where he remained the long night through.

The night wore away, and by dawn the next morning the army was astir. Dindie was still unconscious, and the author of his ill-fortune had begun to contemplate an effort at escape when a man appeared in camp, the sight of whom drove all hope from the breast of the youth.

The man was the notorious renegade and traitor, Bill Mucklewee!

Bill Mucklewee was conducted to General Brock's quarters where he was closeted for some time with the commandant. When he appeared again, the general was with him. He ran his eyes over the camp where they happened to espouse the form and face of Harry. Mucklewee started back as if with terror, exclaiming:

"Great Jehovah! I'll be dashed to thunder!"

"What ails you, Mucklewee?" asked the general.

"Ails me? Why, don't you see that boy! that's him—that sap of all that's mean, and cunnin', and sneakin', and devilish!"

"What do you know about him?"

"Well, just listen! dash my pectoral to thunder! What do I know about him? Why, he's the worst enemy the English have got to contend with. He's a reg'lar American spy. It was him—that very little imp of cussedness, that took your dispatches from Major Cratton; and it war him that led the party that captured the brig-of-war Scout, off the Plaines islands."

"What is the Scout captured?" asked the general, with a sudden start, for aboard the brig was a large amount of supplies for his army.

"Captured! yes! and that boy right before your eyes."

"Well, who is this mighty little fellow that's whipping the English navy?" asked Brock, sarcastically.

"Happy Harry, the dashed brat's called—Happy Harry, the Wild Boy of the Woods."

"Then, if this is the case, he has been play-

dier, but he could retreat only a few feet as the limb had been broken and drooped downward at an inclination of forty degrees. This left but one course to pursue, and he quickly made up his mind to adopt it. He drew his pistol, and as the soldier came within reach, dealt him a powerful blow upon the head.

A groan escaped the Englishman's lips, as he tumbled from the limb upon the tent. It so happened that he fell where the selvages of the canvas lapped one over the other, and under his weight they parted and he fell through into the tent, landing squarely on the princely head of the great Tecumseh.

A war-whoop burst from the savage chief's lips, and an oath from Brock's. The former sprung to his feet and drew his tomahawk and the latter his sword. But in the confusion consequent upon the unceremonious intrusion of the soldier, the table was tipped over and the lamp upset. The canvas took fire, and in a moment the whole structure was in flames, the general, the chief and the wounded soldier barely escaping.

Up among the foliage of the great oak rose the smoke and flame. The green leaves crackled and crisped in the excessive heat which soon became more than human endurance could withstand. Harry was right over the worst of it. He began sneezing and coughing violently, but owing to the general confusion below, no one heard him. Men crowded and jostled each other eager to get a view of Tecumseh in the glow of the burning tent. The horses near at hand snorted and pawed uneasily. A number of men with buckets of water made their way to the fire and dashed them on the flames. This proved the worst blow of all to Harry. Steam, aches and smoke whirled up into the foliage so strong and suffocating that he was compelled to leave his perch, and slide down the limb to the ground in the midst of the astonished army!

"Great hornits!" he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes and gasping for breath, "what the 'tar-nal nation's up here!—a camp-meetin' goin' on!"

"By heavens! a young Yankee!" exclaimed the soldier.

"Ay, that accounts for Dindie's fall," replied a colonel; "lead the little ferret out and shoot him; the surgeon says Dindie will die."

"Yes, shoot him! shoot him!" cried a hundred voices.

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THE SOLDIER.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

He was a soldier in the ranks,
And always fought to win,
But in the ranks of love he stepped
When Cupid said, "Fall in."

He wrote the lady of his love;
"I'll cherish you for aye,
Your smile is all that will campaign
I'm very proud to say."

"I hope our loves are uniform,
I charge you to believe
That I'll surrender at your word,
And never ask reprieve."

"I don't know when my love big-gun;
Your face I can't understand,
And I'm willing now to give
My life, dear, for your land."

"I'm very poor in worldly goods;
No money have I got;
The fortunes of the war, my love,
Are all my little lot."

"My life is wounded round your heart;
And I long to make you mine,
And I am anxious to enlist
In the matrimonial line."

"I'd like to march with you through life,
Nor think it any crime,
If for three years or during the war
You made me step to time."

"Don't say my hopes are empty, Miss,
To please you I would try,
And plenty of head-quarters give
Your bonnets for to buy."

"Do not say no! Were I repulsed
I'd be a lifeless corps;
I think I must get out of here,
And prefer to be no more."

"You'd always be in arms, my dear,
On my parole I'd place you,
And off we'd countermarching go
For silks and things to dress you."

"Your little arms, dear, should make
A life of me; in the shades of private life
How happy we would be."

She said: "Your bold advances, sir,
From pleasing me are far;
In such a cause I would not run
The chances of the war."

"Had you a wife, my powdered sir,
You would deserter soon,
Or her poverty would drag,
Since you are a dragon."

"Your views are so militious, sir,
I charge you not to stay;
We'll not fall in, but we'll fall out,
So, soldier, march away!"

Uncle Ab's "Mission."

BY MARY REED CROWELL

"Oh, dear!"

Just those two words, but so loaded with misery and wofulness that uncle Ab took the red bandana handkerchief off his face, and looked earnestly across the room at Effie Ellis, from whose red, quivering lips the little wailing cry had come.

"Why, child, what's the matter?"

A dear, kind voice, just like uncle Ab himself, and so full of a womanly tenderness that Effie's gray eyes overflowed as he spoke to her.

"I thought you were asleep, uncle Ab. I didn't know you heard me."

"But I did, little girl; and I want to hear more. What is the matter with you? not particularly because you said 'oh, dear!' just now, but because I've noticed how quiet and worried you've seemed these couple of weeks back."

Effie stifled down the onfounding tears, and smiled bravely; only the sad weariness of her sweet young face smote uncle Ab to the very heart.

"I guess I must be homesick, uncle Ab—only don't tell auntie or Nellie."

He looked searchingly in her wan, wearied face, then shook his head gravely.

"I don't think you are homesick, little Effie. But I do think your old uncle can read aright the symptoms of the disease that hurts you, that makes you so still and white, and takes your appetite away."

Effie shaded her face with her hand, but uncle Ab saw the vivid stain of scarlet between the fingers; and he smiled knowingly at the confirmation of his own surmises.

"You've nothing to be ashamed of, child, if you are in love with Eldred Vane. There's not a likelier young fellow far or near."

The crimson tinge faded out again now, and Effie's hand trembled perceptibly.

"Oh, uncle Ab! to think I should let any one know I am so foolish—so wicked, to care for him when he doesn't care for me. Dear old uncle Ab! you are so kind, and thoughtful, and I—am so perfectly miserable!"

She came over to his side, and laid her head on his knee.

"Because you think he don't care about you, Effie! is that why? I thought you and Eldred were fast friends."

A little gasp, as if the memory was a keen sorrow to the girl, came sharply from her lips.

"We were friends—oh, uncle Ab, I can't endure to talk of it. Only, I was so sure he would tell me he loved me. And now cousin Morris has come for me to go home next week, and—and—"

She never finished the sentence, but started suddenly up and left him, too full of her first young heart's ache to tell its burden.

Uncle Ab sat a long while where she left him, a pencil expression on his rugged, handsome face, thinking of Effie's sweet, girlish beauty, and the one early sorrow of her heart.

"Poor child! I wonder what I can do to straighten things for her?"

He was a handsome young fellow—tall, straight, manly, with honest, joyous blue eyes that were winning enough to warrant the young ladies of Blossomborough, in general, and Miss Effie Ellis in particular, in experiencing very keen admiration of him. Everybody knew who he was, comparative stranger though he was; every one knew he was the nephew to Judge Vane, whom he was visiting during his long vacation.

And, under the influences of his charming ways, and city gallantries, and tender attentions, Effie Ellis had come to know she loved him truly, deeply, as she often thought he loved her; as she so often feared he did not.

And he! that very afternoon that Effie Ellis was crying in her bedroom, he lay lazily on the grass under the big horse-chestnut tree, his handsome head resting on his hands, his wide-rimmed straw hat beside him, in company with a volume of poems.

Coming up the walk, uncle Ab spied him and swerved from the path, going toward him.

"Heigho, Vane! you're having a good time all to yourself, aren't you? Will I find the Judge up at the house? I want that copy of *Legrange's Economy*."

Vane smiled a lazy greeting, and even old uncle Ab felt the magic of his manner—thought with a pang of pitiful regret how

much Effie loved this man, and how little to blame she was that she did.

"I think you'll find him, Mr. Ellis. How's Miss Effie this afternoon?"

"Effie! oh, she's peart and happy—and uncle Ab gave an inward groan at his depravity. "She's the light of the house, I can tell you, and I don't know what we shall do when she goes away. Aunt Rhode takes it quite to heart. You knew it, I s'pose?"

Eldred shifted his hands listlessly.

"Going away? no, I hadn't heard. Soon?"

"Next week. It's rather sudden, but young folks will be young folks."

A sudden, quick gleam of interest leaped to Eldred's eyes. Uncle Ab saw it, and began to tell her off.

"I don't know as Effie would care to have me mention it, but you are an old friend, and I guess she won't scold me very hard if I tell you."

Eldred raised up on one elbow, his face all eagerness.

"What is there to tell me, Mr. Ellis? I feel quite sure Effie would not object to my knowing whatever concerns her."

Uncle Ab looked meditatively at the toes of his boots.

"Just so I think. Mr. Vane, what would you think if I were to tell you we're going to have a wedding down to the farmhouse?"

Vane's face turned suddenly pale, and he looked sharply at uncle Ab's face.

"A wedding? Not—not Effie's?"

There was a distant suggestion of real agony in his tone, but it did not deter uncle Ab from going on, quite cheerfully.

"Whose else could it be? and a prettier bride never wore a vail than my little girl will be."

Vane had arisen to his feet, a feeling of strange, suffocating agony tearing at his heart, his face wearing something of the same white asheness Effie had worn an hour ago. But keen as were uncle Ab's eyes, he made no sign, but went on, cheerfully cutting right and left, as were all ladies and a number of the crew, informed us that she had sprung a leak and was settling fast.

Of course we immediately lowered a boat and rescued the unfortunate from their perilous position, and then, as there was no possibility of our being able to right her, we abandoned her and continued our course.

We had several passengers aboard the *Virgilia*, all of the male sex, however, with the exception of one married lady, and I felt inclined to think that several of the younger men were not sorry that we had received an addition to our party, for when the rescued ladies had been furnished with dry and proper clothing by our female passenger they presented an appearance that was decidedly pleasing. They were respectively the wife and sister-in-law of Captain Ashlay, the skipper of the ill-fated *Nightingale*, and were both most bewitchingly beautiful.

Eldred bit his lips. Yes, he knew Morris Ellis, the "fine looking" rascal who had come and deliberately robbed him of his darling; the one, only girl he had loved, whom he in his carelessness and foolish confidence in his own powers of attraction, had now lost—lost forever!

The inward acuteness of wretchedness brought the big drops of perspiration to his forehead, that was paler than ashes, and uncle Ab, with a swift glance of keen satisfaction, arose from the wooden seat, and started toward the house.

"I declare if I hadn't nearly forgotten about the book. I'll go up on, I guess."

He was barely out of sight before Eldred had picked up his hat and was off his way to the Ellis farm-house.

Was it possible he had lost her? had his careless attention ended in robbing him of the one treasure that made his life of interest to him?

Had another lover wooed while he had waited? And he knew, in his heart, that he deserved to lose her.

With rapid, headlong steps he lessened the distance between himself and the Ellis farm, drawing vivid pictures of the happiness there; and wondering, as he hastened on, why he was such a fool as to go to her now, when another had secured her? Yet, there seemed a savage satisfaction in the course he was pursuing; besides, perhaps—it

A light tread; a gleam of white garments, and Effie met him, just where the road turned sharply.

She would have passed him—quietly, untroublously as she always did, only that Eldred stopped her, with a masterful authority that sent the warm blood to her cheeks.

"Effie! Effie!—how could you be so cruel, you know I loved you all the time!"

He had taken her hands, and was looking at her with reproachful, passionate eyes.

"I—cruel! Mr. Vane, I don't know what you mean."

"You don't? You want to thrust at me deeper by making me say how I hate that other fellow who has won you; oh! Effie, my darling—to think you are promised to his wife!"

Flushes of painful red, and deathly white pallor alternated on her face as she looked confusedly, bewilderedly at him.

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Vane. I am not going to be anybody's wife."

"You're not? why, your uncle told me not ten minutes ago you were to be married and go away next week with your cousin Morris—oh, Effie, my little girl, is it a stupid blunder? Are you really for me, after all?"

Effie's lips quivered; then, she raised her face.

"Do you want me, Eldred?"

And for answer he snatched her to his breast.

"Want you, my precious? I should think so!"

Uncle Ab had been home an hour or more, and was reading in the big sitting-room, when they came in, arm in arm; Eldred so proud and happy; Effie shy, blushing, and with downcast eyes.

He looked up from the pages of "Legrange's Economy" as they came up to his desk.

"How's this? Effie, I left you home, crying. Mr. Vane, what's all this?"

"Uncle Ab, what made you tell Eldred I was to be married to cousin Morris?"

There was such womanly reproach in Effie's tones that the old gentleman laughed most amusedly.

"Did I tell Mr. Vane, didn't I tell you Effie was going away next week with Morris—aren't you, Effie—for a visit to his wife?"

He winked triumphantly.

"But you certainly gave me to understand there was to be a wedding—"

Uncle Ab interrupted him with a gravity that was irresistible.

"And isn't there to be one? eh?"

Then, when they had all enjoyed laughing over uncle Ab's little strategic movement, they agreed it was a perfect blessing; and from that day that commenced their engagement, neither Eldred nor Effie regretted his loving "mission."

Canova ought to be living now. When he was alive he chose five hundred beautiful women to sit as models to his statue of Venus, but not one of them had decent toes. Had he lived now his search would have been among a thousand and still unrewarded among the present fashionable little dainty heels and narrow-toed shoes.

A Strange Preserver.

BY WALTER A. ROSE.

"You have no right to ask me the last question, sir; I have given you all the reply I choose to vouchsafe."

Her dress rustled against my feet as she swept past me in queenly dignity, and went below; I could hear the man she had left grind his boot-heels in the deck in his agony of disappointment and wounded pride.

After dinner the following day I was pacing fore and aft the quarter-deck with Mrs. Ashley, as was my custom in fine weather when I had spent the forenoon watch below, when he told me that there had been a regular open quarrel between Morris and Appleton, and that only the prompt intervention of Captains Loring and Ashley had prevented a violent encounter. It had not transpired what the trouble was.

"But," said my pretty informant, "I can give a pretty good guess, for Estella told me to-day that she has promised to marry Alfred Appleton. And I am glad of it, for I think he's a real nice fellow."

We were not far from the equator, and the "doldrums" were upon us. The sails hung idly from the yards and stays, flapping monotonously with the rolling of the ship, and I was leaning over the taftail on the starboard side of the wheel-house in the first dog-watch, thinking of those I had left behind, and watching the sun sink slowly down in a flood of crimson and gold beneath the purple horizon, when my attention was attracted by the sound of voices; Estella Eaton and Eugene Morris were conversing on the opposite side of the wheel-house. They were speaking in such low tones that I could not hear what they said; had I been able to do so, I should probably have moved away, not caring to play the part of eavesdropper; but an indefinable something impelled me to remain, and I leaned over the rail noting the changing tints in the ocean as the sun's upper limb disappeared from view, and only the scarlet and amber hues in the sky were left to mark the spot where the orb of day had sunk to rest.

"You shall never be his; you shall die with me!"

I started from my reverie as these words uttered by Morris in a higher key caught my ears, and ere I could straighten myself fairly up, I saw Morris spring over the taftail with Estella in his arms!

"Man overboard, aft!" I yelled, and then without hesitation I leaped into the water. I was a strong swimmer, and I reached Morris and his victim almost directly they came to the surface, for they had descended deeper than I. Seizing the girl, I sought to wrest her from his grasp; but he clung to her with desperation, and I could see he was insane. Catching him by the collar by sheer strength that I knew could not hold out long, I prevented his sinking with his inanimate burden. Then there was another splash, and as I saw Appleton swimming close to us, I twisted my hand so tightly in the neckcloth of the maniac that he was forced to relax his hold, and Estella would have sunk had not her brother grasped and sustained her.

Balked of his victim, Morris turned the full fury of his maddened hate on me; he was supple and sinewy, and twined his legs around mine and we sunk together. Down deep in the abyss of ocean with the water hissing and seething in our ears, we struggled and fought for mastery, as gladiators fought for their lives and victory in the arenas of ancient Rome. It was a submarine battle *a l'outrance*.

We rose once to the surface, I still locked in his deadly embrace, with my hands upon his throat trying to choke him, to crush out his life to save mine own. The breath of air revived me, and as we sunk again, by herculean effort I released my legs from the grip he had upon them, and pressed down his head; then there came a sudden flash of silvery light, a shock, and as I rose released to the surface I saw the sea around me was incarnadined with blood. A shark had snatched me from the jaws of death.

My tale is told. I was dragged exhausted, well-nigh drowned, into the boat that had been lowered, and which had already picked up Appleton and the fair girl who is now his cherished wife. It did not take me, rough, hard-shinined seaman as I was, long to recover from the effects of that death struggle in the waves; but sometimes, even after all the years that have fled into the dim shadow of the past since then, I feel in my dreams the maniac's grip upon me, and hear again the waters hissing in my ears, and I wake with a start to answer the oft-repeated question: "Jack, dear, why will you persist in eating Welsh-rarebits so late at night?"

Heroes of History.

Mehemet Ali, Regenerator of Egypt.